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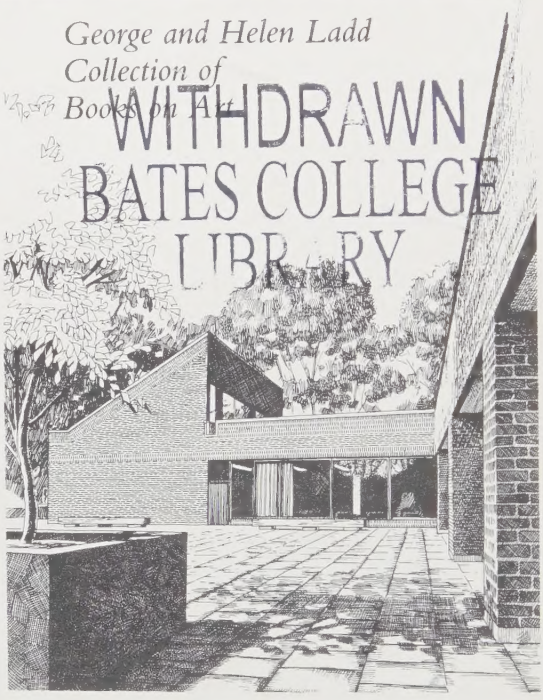

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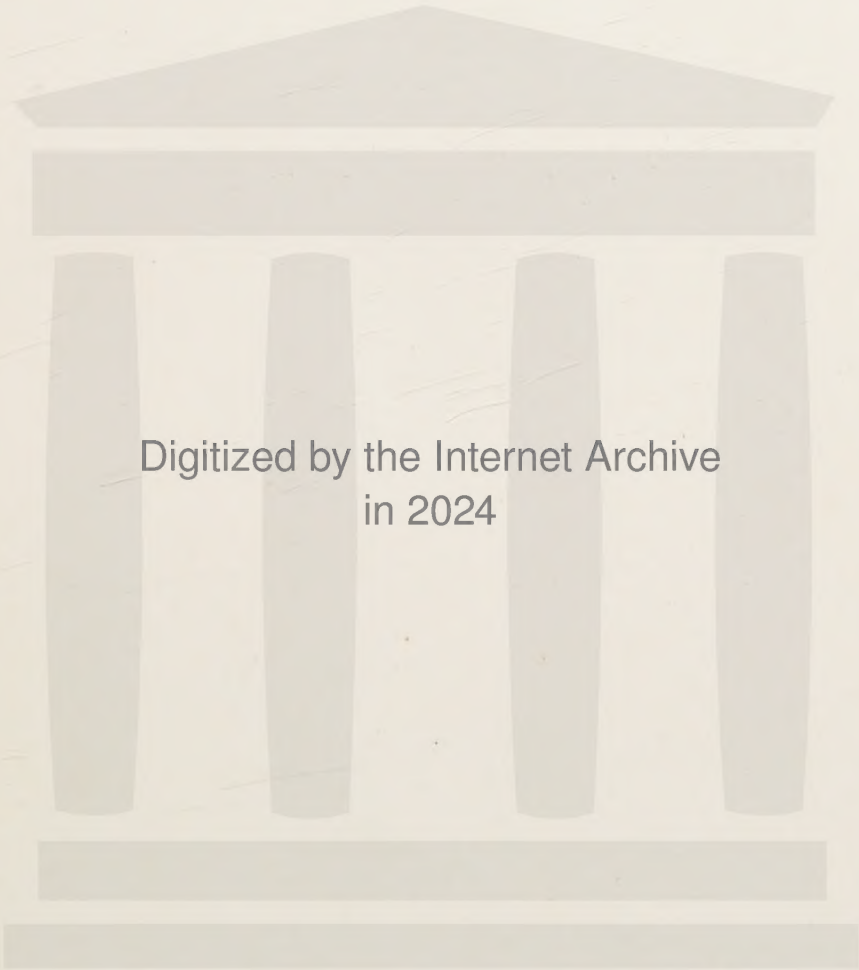

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CHINESE ART

THREE RISHI IN A MOUNTAIN HAUNT. Attributed to Yen Hui.
Yüan Dynasty. Painted on Silk.

(*British Museum.*)

CHINESE ART

An Introductory Handbook to
Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics,
Textiles, Bronzes & Minor Arts

BY

ROGER FRY
LAURENCE BINYON
OSVALD SIRÉN
BERNARD RACKHAM
A. F. KENDRICK
W. W. WINKWORTH

With an Introduction by MADAME QUO TAI-CHI
(Wife of the late Chinese Ambassador to Great Britain)

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PREFACE

THE increasing interest in and understanding of Chinese Art is evidenced by the remarkable development in the last two or three decades in the published works on the subject, which now disposes of a literature that has attained considerable proportions in remarkable ramifications. Works have appeared both in the Orient and Occident, in various languages, ranging from cursory handbooks of a general character to elaborate monographs on special aspects of the subject and expensive *de luxe* catalogues devoted to the illustration of important private collections.

It is the intention in the present volume to steer a middle course by providing an informative yet popular introduction to the study of this vast kingdom, which shall deal briefly with the historical side and indicate the chief types which have been produced in its main divisions, in a series of well-illustrated essays contributed by some of the foremost authorities on their subject. This plan, though it might be thought to have slight theoretical drawbacks, is attended with substantial advantages, because the growth of knowledge makes a comprehensive survey of the whole subject beyond the scope of any one scholar, and it is obvious that economic conditions preclude for the present the undertaking of a monumental work, which undoubtedly the importance and achievements of Chinese Art would warrant.

The present work is based upon the *Burlington Magazine* Monograph entitled "Chinese Art," issued in 1925, long since out of print and at a decided premium. In preparing this new edition the main lines of the earlier work have been followed. Thus Mr. Laurence Binyon, late of the British Museum, has written on Painting; Dr. Osvald Sirén on Sculpture; Mr. Bernard Rackham, Keeper of the Department of Ceramics at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is responsible for Pottery and Porcelain; and Mr. A. F. Kendrick, late of the Victoria and Albert Museum, for the survey of Textiles. It was most unfortunate that Dr. W. Perceval Yetts, who rendered invaluable help in the preparation of the former volume, was on this occasion unable to revise his article on Bronzes for the present issue. Dr. Sirén, also, through absence in the Far East, could not give his article the revision which his views on the evolution of Chinese Sculpture now require. Mr. W. W. Winkworth has prepared an entirely fresh article on Bronzes, with which he has incorporated in rewritten form the section he contributed to the Monograph on the Minor Arts Jade, Enamels, Lacquer, etc. The articles on Painting, Ceramics, and Textiles have been revised by their authors, and the bibliographies brought up to date and one or two others added. A number of the original illustrations have been utilized, while advantage has been taken of the opportunity to introduce numerous fresh examples, and largely, to increase the plates in colour by the inclusion of an important series on Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes and Lacquer from the Lady Lever collection, the Leonard Gow collection, and from various Continental Museums and other sources. It has been felt that, however illuminating the text, the most enlightening and satisfactory method of appreciating Chinese Art is by the study of comparative examples, and especially by presenting these in the beauty of their original colour, which it is possible to record to a large extent by modern methods of reproduction.

The format of the book has been altered to a more handy size, and advantage has been taken of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House to include a selection of the masterpieces there exhibited for the first time.

THE PUBLISHERS.

NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The preparations for a new edition had to be carried through towards the end of the second World War. It is regretted that Mr. Laurence Binyon and Mr. Roger Fry are no longer with us; but Mr. Bernard Rackham and Mr. A. F. Kendrick have kindly revised their sections. A slight extent of substitution in the illustrations may, it is hoped, prove advantageous, and the opportunity has been taken to include a number of minor corrections and adjustments.

THE PUBLISHERS.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THANKS are due to the contributors for kindly revising or rewriting their articles for this new edition, and the publishers must repeat their indebtedness to the various persons who supplied reference and other material incorporated in the earlier issue. Acknowledgment is also made to the authorities of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, for kindly permitting the reproduction of a number of subjects from their collections. Especial recognition is due to the Trustees of the Lady Lever Art Gallery for allowing the incorporation of a number of colour and monochrome plates of Chinese Ceramics from the volume devoted to that subject in the Catalogue of the Lady Lever Art Gallery Collections, and to Dr. Leonard Gow, who has kindly supplied from the Catalogue of the Gow Collection of Porcelain the engravings which form PLATE 40. Grateful acknowledgment is due to Herr Heinrich Jacobs, of Firma Julius Hoffmann, Stuttgart, for the colour engravings of PLATES 54, 55 and 56, from *The Art Worker's Studio*. Messrs. Ernest Benn Ltd. have kindly supplied the blocks which make up PLATES 19 and 72, and permitted the inclusion of Mr. Arthur Waley's article (pp. 70-72). PLATE 62 is included by permission of Dr. J. N. Collie, F. R. S., from his collection, and the publishers must thank those other owners of private collections who have allowed the inclusion of certain of their subjects. Miss Margery Fry has sanctioned the republication of the article by her brother, the late Roger Fry. The illustration on page 46 is from the drawing by Mr. F. H. Andrews of a fragment of polychrome figured silk of the Han period, representing a procession of beasts, recovered by Sir Aurel Stein in the course of his explorations through ancient graves of the Lou-Lan tract.

They also desire to express their indebtedness to Madame Quo Tai-Chi for permission to include the interesting review of Forty Centuries of Chinese Art which she contributed to a recent issue of *The Queen*.

For the selection of subjects illustrated from the International Exhibition of Chinese Art, London, Winter 1935-36, we are indebted as follows: The Jade Bowl (PLATE 70,A), from the Royal Collection, is included by gracious permission of His Majesty the King. We are indebted to Dr. F. T. Cheng, Commissioner of the Chinese Republic for the Exhibition, for permission to reproduce the painting on PLATE 5 and the bronze on PLATE 63,A; while by the courtesy of Mr. Tomoji Okada (of Messrs. Yamanaka & Co., Ltd.), Commissioner for Japanese Exhibits of the Exhibition, it has been possible to include, from the fine specimens sent over from Japan, PLATES 7, 10, and 68, the owners of which are duly recorded on the plates. To the authorities of the Musée du Louvre, Paris, we must record our grateful thanks for the vase on PLATE 26,B; to Mr. H. J. Oppenheim for the bronze bear (PLATE 64); to Mr. Oscar Raphael for PLATES 29,B; and 30,B; to Mr. Morton H. Sands for the screen panels (PLATE 14); and Professor C. G. Seligman for the objects shown on PLATES 63,B, and 70,B.

B. T. B.

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INTRODUCTION

FORTY CENTURIES OF CHINESE ART

A Brief Review

By Madame Quo Tai-Chi
(Wife of the late Chinese Ambassador to Great Britain)

THE International Exhibition of Chinese Art, which opened in London on November 27th, 1935, formed one of the most remarkable collections of art treasures ever seen. It illustrated the culture of my country over a period of nearly 4000 years.

Many of these treasures are priceless; their value has never been considered in terms of money, for we look upon a beautiful object of art as something to be cherished as we would a valued friend. China gave art to Japan. Its powerful influence is impressed throughout the East in Java, Burma, Siam and India.

Art began in China with primitive sculpture in stone, and the origin of this is very obscure. Large carvings were carried out by families rather than one artist, and sometimes several generations passed before the work was completed.

Among the most cherished relics of the Chou Dynasty (1122—249 B.C.) are ten drums, afterwards installed in the two side halls at the entrance to the Temple of Confucius in Peking. Our finest sculpture was executed during the fourth and fifth centuries. These carvings of pure Buddhist inspiration are very rare. The name of Buddha was first heard in China after the return of the Chinese envoy Chang Ch'ien from an adventurous voyage in Central Asia in 126 B.C.—but the religion did not receive official recognition until A.D. 67, and the Tartar Dynasties were its chief patrons. The ideal Buddha of boundless age and " Light in the Western Heavens " is represented in works of that time as sitting upon a lotus pedestal with a jewelled canopy above him.

Cauldrons of Bronze

In my country bronze has been moulded and chiselled from the earliest days, and many examples which have been preserved reveal their archaic origin. During the half mythical period of the third millennium B.C., technical methods steadily improved until the time of the great Yu, founder of the Hsia Dynasty (2205—1767 B.C.), who is recorded to have cast the metal sent up as a tribute from the nine provinces of his Empire, into nine tripod cauldrons of bronze.* One tradition says these were carved with maps and pictures of the products of the provinces, another

* Vide p. 51.

that " an all-wise Emperor " had them decorated with evil demons of the storm and Nature spirits.

Although these cauldrons were lost in the troubles which occurred at the close of the Chou Dynasty, their shape is preserved in the cauldron in the courtyard of the Royal Palace at Peking. There were over a thousand treasures from the Imperial Palace to be seen in London, among them some sacrificial bowls, of which so few have been preserved. Marco Polo speaks of these bowls when describing his visit to the Court of Kublai Khan, and the bowls of gold and silver filled with Kumiss which adorned the banqueting table.

A famous one is wrought of silver in the shape of a hollowed tree trunk, made by one Pishan by name, in the cyclical year hsin-ch'iou of the period Chih Cheng (A.D. 1361). It has the hall-mark " Hua yu " flowering jade. A rhyming verse makes a curious inscription under the cup:

" A hundred cups inspired the poet Li Po,
A single jar intoxicated the Taoist Lin Ling.
It is all because they delighted in wine
That their famous names have come down to us."

I think some of the most interesting relics of primitive times are the oracle bones, which date back three or four thousand years. They are inscribed with ancient pictographs. From these much lost knowledge of the earliest forms of Chinese lettering has been obtained, though many characters have not yet been identified.

Divination by oracle bones, which were made of tortoiseshell or sheep's blade bones, was the method of deciding future conduct by consulting one's illustrious ancestors.

Some Sacred Emblems

A knowledge of some of the old traditions adds to the enjoyment of the beautiful objects. It will be noticed that certain trees and flowers occur again and again in carvings of wood, ivory and jade, as well as in lacquer work, pictures and embroideries.

The sacred lotus is well known, and perhaps nearly as familiar are the Taoist sacred plants—the peach, which is the tree of Life in the Kun-Lun Paradise, the fruit according to tradition ripening once in three thousand years and bestowing immortality upon all those who eat of it; the branching fungus called Ling-Chih is a frequent emblem, as well as the Sung, Chu and Moi, pine, bamboo and prunus, the first two because they are evergreen and the last-mentioned because it still flourishes in old age.

These emblems tell us many things about the works in which they appear. If the wild plum takes a prominent place then we know it is winter-time, the tree peony spring, and the lotus, reminding us of drowsy waters overshadowed by drooping willows, is the sign of summer; autumn is aptly represented by the chrysanthemum. In the decorative works of Ssuchi-Hua these flowers of the four seasons frequently appear.

DETAIL OF A PICTURE OF PARADISE. T'ang Dynasty. Painting on Silk.
Stein Collection. (British Museum.)

On many of the old lovely lacquer twelve-fold screens the idea is carried further, with a flower for every month. January—prunus, February—the peach blossom, March—tree peony, April—double cherry, May—magnolia, June—pomegranate, July—lotus, August—pear, September—mallow, October—chrysanthemum, November—gardenia, and December—poppy.

These flowers are much used in embroideries. We have always excelled in portraying birds and flowers in this way, and modern embroidery is still done according to the traditional designs.

I was glad to learn that among the sixty-four unique examples of jade, there was the rarest piece of all from the Peking collection. It consists of three seal blocks joined together and cut from a single block of the rarest coloured jade of all—golden yellow.

In China jade is looked upon not only as a precious stone, but is believed to have magical and curative properties. It was the traditional food of the Taoist genii. Called Yu, there are three leading varieties obtainable in different districts. A Manchu author describes the jade in Eastern Turkestan as mountains of jade.

There are still a number of Western people who imagine that jade is always green, whereas it is found in many shades, and purest white is still, as it used to be, in greatest demand for carving. Kingfisher feather and beeswax yellow is how we describe some of the tones, but the rarest of all are mutton-fat white with vermilion spots, and spinach-green with golden points.

Jade has not only held an important position for centuries, but some objects made of it have become world-famous. A traveller, Friar Oderic, in A.D. 1318, describes a jade cistern at the Imperial Palace, lavishly decorated with pearls and gold. This disappeared at the fall of the Mongol Dynasty, but was found later by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, a patron of arts and a gifted painter and poet (two of his paintings will be seen in the exhibition), in a Buddhist monastery, where ignorant monks had been using it, now stripped of its pearls, for storing salt meat. The Emperor was so overjoyed at the restoration of this lovely cistern that he immediately composed an ode, which he had engraved inside it.

Chinese pictorial art, I think one may say, commenced with our writing, of which no scholar can give the exact origin, though popular belief is that it gradually developed from pictures of the objects to phonetic sounds representing them.

Our perspective is metrical, there are no shadows, and reflections are always perfect repetitions.

Painting is said to have been invented by a minister of the legendary Yellow Emperor, Shih Huang. Many of our Emperors were artists of no mean achievement, among them Emperor Luan-Ti of the Liang Dynasty (A.D. 503—557). The Sung, Yüan and Ming Dynasties all produced important artists, among them Chiu Ying, great master of the last period, who was famous for his life-like groups of people in picturesque surroundings. Chao-Mangfu was the master of the Yüan Dynasty, but a picture which will arouse great interest in London is Hsia Kuei's

scroll painting, "Ten Thousand Miles of the Yangtze," which is 38 feet long.

Our artists studied the objects they depicted with great attention to detail, and often took a long time to complete a work, but an exception to this was Liu Liang, a native of Kuanting, who flourished in the middle of the fifteenth century, and was famous for his birds and flowers. Women artists were not much to the fore. Almost the only one who has her name immortalized, particularly for her ink bamboos, is Kuan-Tao-Sheng, who lived in the Yüan period.

Purposely I have refrained until the end from mentioning China's greatest art medium, porcelain, which was, of course, invented in my land—hence your term "china" for all crockery ware.

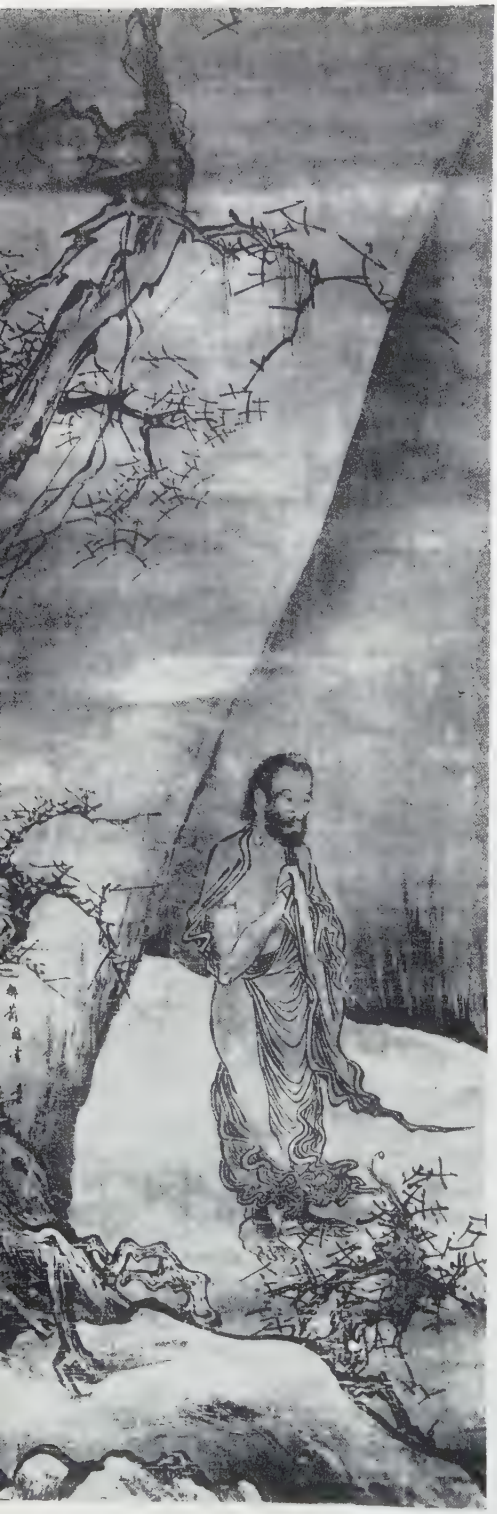
It is on record that Wu Wang, founder of the Chou Dynasty in the twelfth century B.C., sought out a descendant of the conquered Emperor Shin because of his skill in pottery, but porcelain was not made until the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.). What beauty has been enshrined upon its fine hard-grained surface! How many lovely examples have been cherished by their owners for centuries, preserved in many cases hidden in silken wrappings, only to be exposed to the eyes of true connoisseurs. Our porcelain reached perfection during the Northern Sung Dynasty, but the dynasty which has gained the most world-wide fame is the Ming (A.D., 1369—1644). The Ming Dynasty actually comprises thirteen dynasties, and continued until Manchu rule began in China, and decadence in art followed. The richest colours are to be seen in the Ming, Hsuan-Te (A.D. 1426—1435) ware, a rich, glowing ruby-red; the Kuang Yao, a soft grey, like a pigeon's breast; Chien Yao, velvety white; but the rarest the Chia Cheng, "blue of the sky after rain." This colour, which took years to produce, was made according to Imperial order, "as blue as the sky, as clear as a mirror, as thin as paper and as resonant and musical as a stone of jade." It far eclipsed every other porcelain in delicacy. The green glaze of the Sung Dynasty has never been equalled for its clear dark grass-green tone. Turquoise, sapphire, amethyst, all the colours of precious stones, are merged in our porcelains, some so lovely that they can never be copied.

Despite political and other troubles, we still love beauty, and even at Shanghai to-day we can buy the Yi-Ksieng-Ho pottery teapots which are produced on the shores of T'ai Hui. This fine ware is decorated with birds, flowers and dragons, and is still believed to be the best for brewing tea. If much of China's art is lacking to-day, it is not lost, only sleeping. Some day we shall carry on a tradition which has made the world marvel.

The foregoing article was specially contributed to *The Queen* newspaper, Oct. 9th, 1935, and is here reprinted by permission of its author and by the courtesy of the Editor of that periodical.

SCENE by Ku K'ai-Chih. *c.* A. D. 344-*c.* 406 Ink and colours on silk. Height of roll, 9¾ in.

(British Museum.)



B.

A.

A BUDDHA'S FIRST MEETING WITH A SICK MAN. Probably ninth century. Colours on silk. 16 in. by 8 in. *(British Museum. Stein Collection.)* *B*—BUDDHA COMING DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN. By LIANG K'AI. Thirteenth century. Ink, with some colour. From a Japanese reproduction.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHINESE ART

By Roger Fry

THERE are, I believe, many people well acquainted with some aspects of European art who still feel that the art of China is strange to them. For them to come upon a book like this is to come upon a world to which they have no key. They may know but little of Christian hagiology, but at least the names of the Christian Pantheon are familiar to their ears, whereas they have no feelings at all about Avalokitesvaras, Amidas and Arhats. Again, the whole of Chinese symbolism will be unintelligible to them. They know, perhaps, that the dragon is symbolical of the heavens, but they do not feel any point in the symbol, being familiar with dragons only in quite other settings. It may well be that this remoteness of subject matter in Chinese art makes them feel it a closed book to them. They may feel happy enough in the presence of the trifling bibelots, the "Chinoiseries," of later periods, which have become acclimatized in our drawing-rooms, but the great art, above all the early religious art, will repel them by its strangeness.

Now, I believe this is a mistaken fear. Chinese art is in reality extremely accessible to the European sensibility, if one approaches it in the same mood of attentive passivity which we cultivate before an Italian masterpiece of the Renaissance, or a Gothic or Romanesque sculpture. A man need not be a Sinologist to understand the aesthetic appeal of a Chinese statue. It may represent some outlandish divinity, but it is expressed according to certain principles of design and by means of a definite rhythm. And it so happens that both the principles of Chinese design and the nature of their rhythms are not half so unfamiliar to the European eye as Chinese musical rhythms are to our ears. On the contrary, they are so similar that I could point to certain much-beloved European artists who are nearer in this respect to the Chinese than they are to certain other great European artists. Chinese art is nothing like so difficult of access as Hindu art. It has, to begin with, colour schemes that are pre-eminently harmonious to the European eye; it has the same general notions of a similar equilibrium and it does not allow the elaboration of detail to destroy the general structure; whereas in much Hindu art and in some of the art of the Near East we must, I think, abandon some of these demands and content ourselves with other, and to our feelings, less important qualities, with mere diversity, multiplicity and intricacy.

Still, there is a difference. We do recognize some peculiar flavour in

almost any Chinese work of art; although it would not be hard to find specimens that might puzzle a connoisseur as to whether they were really Chinese or not. There can be little doubt that the idea of what was characteristically Chinese was much clearer to our minds even forty years ago than it is to-day. It was still clearer to our eighteenth-century ancestors who collected "chinoiseries," and had Chippendale furniture or Huet decorations "in the Chinese manner."

The idea of a typical Chinese object has grown progressively vaguer in proportion as our knowledge has advanced. It is not so many years ago that a piece of Sung pottery was an extraordinary rarity. I remember that when the magnificent Morgan collection of porcelain was first installed in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, there was a single Sung piece pointed out, perhaps with pardonable exaggeration, as an almost unique object. Chinese art was still mainly the art of the Ming and still more of the K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung periods. Now we go back in pottery to Han times at least, and in bronzes much further, and with our greater knowledge much of that specially Chinese character is seen to belong rather to a period than to a people, and one is hard put to it to say what special common quality unites a Ch'ien Lung figurine with a Buddhist statue of the Wei dynasty and a sculpture or bronze of the Chou. At one point we find Chinese art merging insensibly into Scythian; at another Greco-Indian influences predominate. It would indeed be surprising if one could generalize readily about the art of so vast a territory, extending through such long periods of human history, so that if I do now attempt to make certain generalizations, it is rather with a view to pointing out certain lines along which our attention may profitably be directed than in the hope of establishing any important general truth.

The first thing, I think, that strikes one is the immense part played in Chinese art by linear rhythm. The contour is always the most important feature of the form.

Next we note that rhythm is almost always of a flowing, continuous character.

Finally, I would note a peculiarity in their plastic feeling which it is difficult to describe clearly. It is not that they are lacking in the imaginative grasp of three-dimensional forms, but that the mental schema on which they are constructed differs from the characteristic mental schema of European workers in the round. When the Chinese conceive solid forms, they take as their points of departure the sphere, the egg and the cylinder, whereas the greater part of European sculpture and painting, in so far as it creates ideated plastic forms, takes its point of departure from the cube or at least from some simple polyhedron.

The first of these characters to which I have referred is, I think, sufficiently obvious. To take their painting, to begin with: No doubt European painting started on a linear basis, and no doubt it frequently returns to it, but from very early times the linear rhythm began to be influenced by other considerations, and as our knowledge of external appearance progressed, or rather as we absorbed more of it into the material of the painter's expression, the linear rhythm became more and

more subordinate to other considerations. When we come to Rembrandt it is hard to say that any linear basis survives. Now a Chinese picture, even of the later and more highly sophisticated periods—and by the way Chinese art seems to have been sophisticated from the remotest antiquity —never loses the evidence of the linear rhythm as the main method of expression. And this is only natural, the medium used being always some kind of water-colour and the art of painting being always regarded as a part of the art of calligraphy. A painting was always conceived as the visible record of a rhythmic gesture. It was the graph of a dance executed by the hand.

This predominance of linear rhythm is felt in all Chinese decoration, and even in sculpture. In sculpture it makes itself felt in the emphatic continuity and flow of the contour and in the treatment of drapery, which is often rather inscribed on the form than modelled as a separate plastic element. And wherever such drapery is inscribed or however it is indicated, the direction of the folds takes on the character of a linear rhythm.

Secondly, the linear rhythm of Chinese art is peculiarly continuous and flowing. It is never so flaccid as Hindu rhythms, nor is it ever so harshly staccato, jerky and broken as certain rhythms with which Europe is familiar. There is nothing in Chinese art as ungracious and literally shocking as the rhythms of fifteenth-century sculpture in Germanic lands and the contemporary painting of the Netherlands. It hardly ever attains quite the refinement and nervous subtlety of the rhythms of certain early Persian draughtsmen, but it is more closely akin to that than any other. Certainly to our eyes the linear rhythms of the Chinese artist present no difficulty. We are familiar with very similar ones in much Italian art. The contour drawing of certain pictures by Ambrogio Lorenzetti comes very close indeed to what we can divine of the painting of the great periods. Botticelli is another case of an essentially " Chinese " artist. He, too, relies entirely on linear rhythm for the organization of his design, and his rhythm has just that flowing continuity, that melodious ease which we find in the finer examples of Chinese painting. Even Ingres has been claimed, or denounced, as the case may be, as a " Chinese " painter; and with some reason, for he, too, holds intensely to his linear scheme, and, however plastic the result, even the plasticity is effected more by the exact planning of the linear contour than by any of the other means which the European painter can rely on.

It would be a mistake to suppose that because the Chinese rely on their linear rhythms, their paintings are flat, like the works of some modern pre-Raphaelites. On the contrary, they have a keen feeling for the volumes which their contours evoke, and avoid anything either in the nature of the rhythm or in the manner of drawing it, which will check the idea of plasticity, will bring us up, as it were, with a jerk on the surface of the picture.

Finally, I come to the nature of the plasticity of Chinese art—whether it is suggested on a flat surface by line or executed in solid relief. When we Europeans refer to plasticity we talk, naturally, in terms of planes,

but I doubt if the Chinese artist has ever conceived of this method of handling plastic forms. I do not know what language he uses, but I suspect he would, even in speaking, refer shapes to cylinders, spheres and ellipsoids.

If I am right, we touch here on some profound difference in the creative methods and in the imaginative habits of European and Chinese artists, but though they affect the creative artist profoundly, these differences hardly ever form a barrier to our appreciation and understanding of the other method.

In its formal aspects, then, Chinese art presents no serious difficulty to our European sensibility. I have admitted that much of its content is inspired by feelings which are not easily accessible to us, but it is really very difficult to us to enter into the psychology which lies behind much of our own mediæval art.

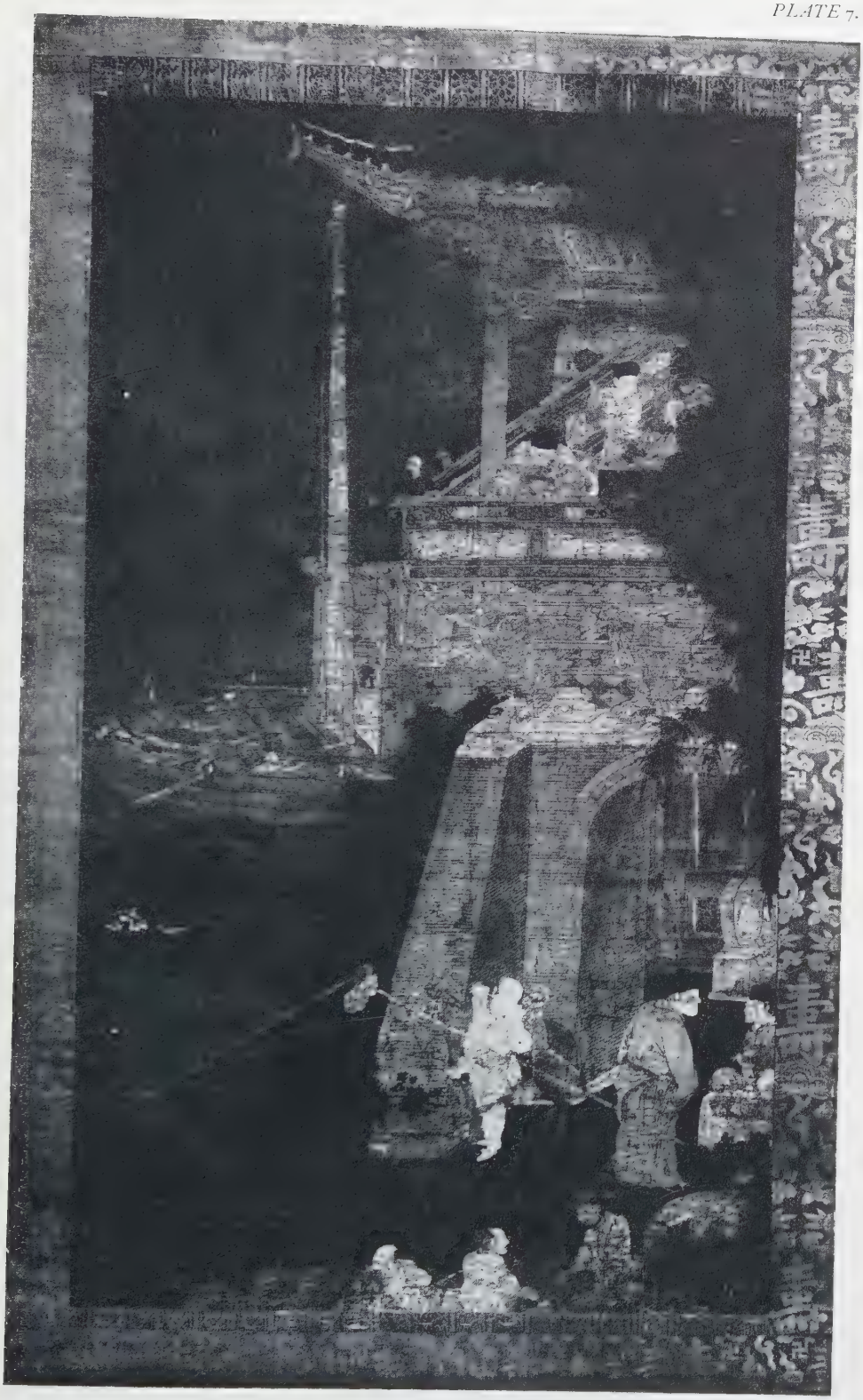
Another point of difficulty may well be their attitude to the human figure. We inherit from the Greeks a peculiar arrogance about the species of animal to which we happen to belong. We have, therefore, devoted a quite special and intensive study to the forms of our own kind; we have developed thereby many specialized sensibilities and a mass of associated ideas which we carry in our " unconscious," ready to vibrate in response to the slightest suggestion on the part of the artist. The Chinese have never apparently focused their attention so narrowly on their own species. They have never lost sight of its relative position in the scheme of nature. As a result we are likely often to feel the inadequacy, and from our point of view, the relative insignificance of their figure imagery, though in their sculpture they could at times attain to a noble impressiveness in their human form. But what may well counterbalance this defect is the relatively greater sense in the Chinese of the significance of animal and plant forms. The mere absence of that special human arrogance of the European has allowed the Chinese to retain much of that peculiar intimacy with animal life which characterizes primitive man and persists in our own childhood. They understand the life of animals from within and by a sympathetic intuition, not by an external and merely curious observation. It is this which gives the peculiar vitality to their animal forms; the parts where by reason of the inner life which the artist has divined and expressed. It is much the same with their treatment of plant forms. These are treated with a certain grave respect, which our own flower painters have rarely possessed.

In another point the content of Chinese art may strike a note that is strange to Western minds, and that is the absence of the tragic spirit. Whilst their fun is sometimes almost childishly naive and exuberant, their gravity is never altogether untouched by humour. A Michelangelo is unthinkable in the atmosphere of Chinese art; still more perhaps an El Greco letting himself go whithersoever the exaltation of his fevered imagination carried him. This kind of exaltation, as well as dramatic intensity of human feeling, seem unknown. Their most exalted religious feeling leads them into a more contemplative mood, and one more remote from possible action than ours. It is a mood, too, which admits of a certain playful humour which is strange to our feelings.

FISHING ON A SNOWY DAY. Painting by unidentifiable artist. Period of Five Dynasties.

(National Palace Museum of China.)

BIRD ON BOUGH. Anonymous. Colours on silk. Sung period. Size 10½ in. by 8¾ in.
Eumorfopoulos Collection.
(British Museum.)



LANDSCAPE WITH PALACE PAVILIONS. Anonymous. Colour on silk. Sung dynasty.
95¼ in. by 39¼ in.

MOUNTAIN PEAKS. Part of a landscape roll. By MA YÜAN. Thirteenth century. Ink and slight colour on silk.
Height, 16½ in. *(Freer Collection, Washington, U.S.A.)*

But allowing all due weight to such considerations, it is, I think, surprising how nearly akin to the finest European feeling is that which inspires the great creative art of China. Chinese art appealed to Western nations originally almost entirely in virtue of its technical ingenuity, its brilliant and tasteful execution, and the "quaintness" due to its unfamiliarity. As we get to know it better, as we explore more and more the great classic periods, we are led to treat it with the same respect and the same concentrated attention which we have to devote to our own great masters if we would apprehend the nature of their states of mind.

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PAINTING

By Laurence Binyon

FORTY-FIVE years ago, if one talked of the beauty and grandeur of Chinese painting, people stared and looked incredulous. Englishmen who had passed their lives in Shanghai would become quite heated in their denials of the very existence of this art. But in the short interval all has been changed. The names of Chinese masters do not yet, it is true, come readily to the lips of their Western admirers; but Chinese painting is in fashion, and examples attributed to the most famous names of all the classic periods are to be seen in the Western world. This material requires to be severely sifted. What we know for certain amounts to very little. But how to sift it? There is the radical difficulty of this study.

For the student of European art there are any number of documented works which may be selected as starting-points. Yet in the days before photography made rigorous comparisons possible, how easily were casual ascriptions accepted! Chinese art has suffered from untold destruction. At Tun-huang, on the Western frontier, frescoes dating from the sixth century onwards still exist, but the three hundred wall-paintings by the greatest of Chinese masters, Wu Tao-tzu, were all destroyed long ago—as were thousands of others—and the vast Imperial collection of the finest of the silk-paintings of the splendid Sung period was burned by the Tartars. Later times have witnessed similar holocausts.

The Exhibition at Burlington House was memorable, because for the first time a selection of the treasures preserved in the national collections at Peking was disclosed to Western students. In Japan is to be found a splendid array of old Chinese paintings, especially of the Sung period. But even in the case of these pictures there is seldom any complete certainty as to date and authorship.

All we can attempt at present is to acquire a sound conception of the style of each epoch; and to establish a standard of quality from the best of the known examples.

Early Periods.—When Chinese painting emerges into our view from the ages of conjectured history in a tangible example, we are surprised to find how little it has of primitive character. In the British Museum is a painting attributed to Ku K'ai-chih, one of the most famous of all Chinese masters [Plate 3]. Whether actually by his hand or not, this picture undoubtedly represents the design of the period of the Chin dynasty (A.D. 265—420), and is, therefore, a document of capital importance. It is a long roll of silk on which are painted illustrations to a prose

composition entitled "Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace," by a third-century writer. In one scene a lady of the first century refuses to ride with the Emperor in his palanquin: "In the old pictures," she says, "only ministers ride with the Emperor." And, no doubt, that age seemed to itself very modern, with so immense a past stretching behind it. Confucius was already as far away as William the Conqueror is from us in England now. Everything in this picture betrays the refinement of an old and great civilization.

To a casual glance Ku K'ai-chih's painting yields but little of its beauty and significance. After twenty years' familiarity I have found it every day more wonderful. What is the secret of this compelling attraction? It is, I think, a very profound and subtle sense of life. It is exquisitely humane. You feel a whole race, with its gradually attained victories over instinct and circumstance, its security of fine habit, behind the artist; just as you feel all the artist's finely organized nature in every turn of the brush as it traces those delicate lines on the silk, and (as if it were something quite simply done) creates a sensitive human form in its natural dignity, the supple movements of hand and wrist, a discreet look in the eyes, or the intimacy of glances exchanged.

Thinking for a moment of the painting of other countries, we realize at once one peculiar mark of this Chinese art. Painting for the Chinese is a branch of handwriting. No European can ever appreciate like a native the innermost subtleties of their calligraphy; but in distinguishing the quality of a painting we have to train ourselves to be sensitive to the character of every brush-stroke, which in a master's work is alive—still giving out the life-force put into it—to every least blot. In Ku K'ai-chih's painting this side of Chinese art is fully seen. The artist has a vision in his mind of the forms he means to depict, and writes them down; his hand, with the writing-brush in it, is impelled to continuous lines, avoiding the abruptness and broken shapes of actual appearances; its tendency is to take long curves; always to *flow*.

On many of the figures we notice scarves which ripple out from the form as if buoyed on a breeze. Are these merely for the joy of the calligrapher? Not wholly, I think. They belong rather to that delight in *movement* which seems innate in Chinese art. We find it earlier in the incised stone friezes of Han times, which have the appearance of being copied from paintings. It is wonderfully displayed in the other "Ku K'ai-chih" painting extant (in the Freer Collection at Washington) which is by a different, a drier, and certainly a later hand, and has a legendary subject. There a fairy-chariot drawn by six dragons moves gloriously through the air. (A twelfth or thirteenth-century version of this work is in the British Museum.) But this joy in expressing movement is manifest in all typical Chinese decoration. How it loves the forms of flame, of wave, of cloud, of flying bird and dragon! Western decoration, when we put typical examples side by side, seems frozen by contrast. But this comes from the deepest intuitions of the race, from its very conception of the universe.

In the sixth century the Chinese view of artistic excellence was crystal-

lized in the famous Six Canons of Hsieh Ho, himself a painter. Interest centres in the first of these canons, translated literally by Mr. Waley, "Spirit-harmony; life's motion." The precise meaning of this has been disputed by scholars. Mr. Waley deprecates the use of the word rhythm (as in Prof. Giles' condensation "Rhythmic Vitality"), because "nothing like symmetry of design or balance of forms is meant." Rhythm is indeed loosely used by critics as equivalent to "repetition"; but its proper meaning has nothing to do with symmetry or balance, and refers to related movements (expressed with completeness only in the dance); it is only by analogy used of painting, the forms in which, though stationary, can convincingly suggest movement. And the natural movement of life is rhythmical. It seems clear that the ideal aim of the artist is to let the cosmic energy which animates the living world stream through his work. When we use terms like "inspiration," "daemonic," "creative," we are, no doubt, making a similar requirement in art.

Chinese legends of great painters tell us that their creations, as the final touch was put to them, assumed actual life: horses galloped away from the wall on which they were painted, dragons soared through the ceiling. Ku K'ai-chih, when some paintings disappeared—they had really been stolen—remarked that they were in the nature of spirits and had no doubt rejoined the immortals. This view, that a great work of art shares the energy of the universal spirit, is in marked antithesis to the modern Western view that it is the expression of an individual personality. "The operations of the spirit producing life's motion" is Mr. Waley's translation, approved by Prof. Pelliot. Since the expression of movement, especially of flowing, undulating movement, is peculiarly characteristic of Chinese design, we may be allowed to emphasize also the last part of the canon a little; but it is the "operations of the spirit" which is the phrase of paramount significance.

After the two paintings attributed to Ku K'ai-chih, our next documents are certain frescoes at Tun-huang of about the sixth century, reproduced by M. Pelliot in his great work, of which six volumes of plates have been published. Animated as these are, they are obviously of a local school, though we cannot well judge of them in the photographer's rather faint translation.

The T'ang Dynasty.—Of the seventh century, by which time the Empire was consolidated afresh under the T'ang Emperors, the most famous master is Yên Li-pên. A scroll-painting by him, *Thirteen Emperors*, was recently acquired by the Boston Museum. The emperors are portrayed singly, each with attendants. It is a virile work, important for its early date. The same museum has a fine copy after Yên Li-pên by a Sung artist, *Scholars Collating Texts*, notable as a complex figure composition. From his third expedition to Central Asia, Sir Aurel Stein brought fragments of a silk painting dating from the early eighth century. The fragments are now in the Delhi Museum, and were reproduced in the *Burlington Magazine*, June, 1925. The district, now desert, where they were found, was settled by the Chinese, and the painting is entirely Chinese in style. It apparently depicted a festival in honour of spring. Ladies

DRAGONS OF MIST AND TORRENT. Two sections (continuous) of a roll. By Ch'ên Yung. Dated 1344. Ink Painting.

TWO SPARROWS ON A BAMBOO BRANCH.
By Mu Ch'i. Sung Dynasty. Black and white on paper.
71 3/4 in. by 17 7/8 in.

and their attendants stand under trees, some green, others scattering their blossom, and watch dancers dancing to music. It is unfortunately in a very fragmentary state, but what remains is as fresh in colour as when painted. The types show the T'ang ideal; a more massive type than the elegant slender forms of the preceding age; a full, rounded face; curved eyebrows; hair heaped in a mass around and above the head; full lips, and a serene expression. The affinities with the earliest Japanese paintings, modelled on contemporary T'ang art, are remarkable.

Of T'ang painting almost all has perished, though this, according to all tradition, was the grandest age of art. In this epoch great changes were wrought in the art of China. The Empire vastly expanded its dominion westward; hence the Chinese became interested in foreigners from the West, their strange types and costume, and the art they brought with them. There was much intercourse with India, for Buddhism now had strong hold of the Chinese mind, colouring though not supplanting the indigenous conceptions of life and the universe, and giving a world of motives to artists. The greatest works of the period were probably Buddhist, and the greatest of the Buddhist painters was Wu Tao-tzu [see PLATES 2 and 4].

Among the very few authentic specimens of T'ang painting are five portraits of saints (mostly much damaged) painted by Li Chên about A.D. 800 and preserved in Japan. These are in a careful style; they show nothing of the impetuous, vehement brush-work described as characteristic of Wu Tao-tzu's mature manner and doubtless imitated by many followers. Nor do we find this influence in such of the Buddhist paintings from Tun-huang, now in the British Museum, the Delhi Museum and the Louvre, as may be classed as Chinese; though in some of these a rather coarse execution is combined with really grand design. This series of paintings constitutes, however, a most precious document, since they are indisputable works of the ninth century and give us some idea, obtainable nowhere else, of what Chinese Buddhist art of T'ang times was like, if only in a provincial form. The imagery and formula are Indian, where the painter depicts a vision of Paradise or of the Bodhisattvas and their attendants; but the artistic idiom is Chinese. And in the scenes from the Buddha legend or from Jataka stories everything is Chinese. Also there are many portraits of donors, showing contemporary costume.

Echoes of a rarer beauty and a grander style are to be found in the early Buddhist paintings of Japan, deriving from the central T'ang tradition. In Japan, too, is a set of three pictures, a Buddhist trinity, long accepted as the work of Wu Tao-tzu himself. In these there is the broad and bold brush-stroke, and something of the amplitude of form, which the records of the master lead us to expect: but they do not convince us as supreme creations. Other pictures still extant are ascribed to him; but it is pretty certain that nothing from his hand survives. Those who saw him at work were amazed at the economy of means by which—using no "heavy ink shading"—he suggested the volume of a form, its saliences and hollows. He worked "as if a whirlwind possessed his hand." He seems to have

had all the creative energy of a Michelangelo or a Rubens, and, like them, to have transformed the traditions out of which he came.

But in China the formed styles of all the great masters are piously perpetuated, so that none is wholly superseded. Side by side with the impassioned visions of the Death of Buddha (a conception and composition which may be divined from Japanese imitations, such as the one in the British Museum) and scenes of Purgatory, and majestic Spirits of Compassion, there was an art of *genre*, delicate and intimate in style. The *Listeners to Music*, by Chou Fang, reproduced in the *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. XXX, p. 210,[1] is a beautiful example of T'ang *genre*. More than one version exists of this picture, the far-away prototype of Japanese Ukiyo-yé. How dominant a part is played in this design by the spacing! Of the formal elements of design this gift of spacing is China's greatest contribution to the world's art. It is something original and unique.

The opening of T'ang tombs has made us familiar with the immensely vigorous pottery figures of horses and camels, with or without riders, which were favourite subjects of the artists of the time. Han Kan was the most famous of all the T'ang painters of horses; but nothing of his work survives. The Chinese had a passion for fine horses; and painters delighted to depict them in their native wildness —symbols of speed and freedom.

And now, too, landscape began to be seriously developed. The Ku K'ai-chih roll in the British Museum contains a landscape which is the only primitive part in it. But the T'ang painters set themselves to grapple with the problems of representing distance and the relative proportions of objects in space. Could we see specimens of this lost art, they would perhaps seem still relatively "primitive," compared with the copies and imitations of them made in later times; but we cannot be sure. Li Ssu-hsün and Wang Wei were leaders of rival schools. The style of Li Ssu-hsün may be seen in an album of small paintings of imperial palaces in the British Museum: one of these is reproduced in colour as the frontispiece to Mr. Waley's book; also in other derivative paintings. It is a formal style, designed in blue and green with gold lines emphasizing the forms and fissures of mountains and rocks. Long horizontal scrolls were painted with panoramas of jagged peaks and ranges rising from lake or sea. Wang Wei's was a more melting and romantic art. One of his most famous scrolls depicted the scenery about his home. It was engraved on stone, and rubbings from the stones have been published by the late Prof. Laufer. A free copy of the picture, attributed to Chao Mêng-fu, is in the British Museum.

The Sung Dynasty.— With the Sung dynasty we reach at last something more tangible and concrete than the fragments, vestiges, and literary records which leave us still hungry for a sight of the lost glories of T'ang painting. Yet we have to recognize that genuine Sung pictures are relatively very rare. Japan happily had a passion for the art of the later

[1] See the article in that number on the rarity of Ancient Chinese Paintings, by Arthur Waley. In the article, as in his amply documented "Introduction to the Study of Chinese Paintings," Mr. Waley shows how rare the really old paintings were, even in early times.

or "Southern" Sung, and still preserves a number of fine examples, which have been reproduced in various Japanese publications. These possibly give us a one-sided notion of Sung art as a whole; nevertheless, the art of this age has a definite character which makes its productions, whether in paintings or ceramics, recognizable.

The Sung age is divided into two periods by the Tartar conquest of Northern China. In 1127 the Emperor Hui Tsung was carried into captivity. Hangchou, in the south, the marvellous city described by Marco Polo, became the new capital of "Southern Sung."

Hui Tsung, himself an artist, was an enthusiastic collector and patron of artists. Pictures of eagles and falcons, ascribed to him, are fairly common, but need not be seriously considered in connection with his name. Under him the Academy of Painting rose to great importance. For a time there was a reaction against the subservience to tradition which persists through Chinese art. "Bird and flowers" were a very favourite theme, and close observation of nature, combined with "simplicity and nobility of line," was officially inculcated.[1]

Among the painters of Northern Sung, Li Lung-mien is the most renowned name. The veneration accorded him by his countrymen seems to spring not only from admiration of his art but still more from the fact that he represented in a consummate degree the traditional culture of China. He was a most distinguished connoisseur of old works of art, and a poet. As an artist he was an enthusiastic follower of tradition, and much of his activity was given to copying former masterpieces. He copied Ku K'ai-chih's "Admonitions," and seems to have worked chiefly in an archaic style with a fine outline and no colour. Many ink-paintings ascribed to him are extant, and a few may be originals. Mrs. Eugene Meyer's book on Li Lung-mien gives an interesting account of his friends and surroundings. He retired from Court just at the time when the reaction against tradition inspired the above-mentioned instructions to the painters of the Academy.

A rather older contemporary was Kuo Hsi, who was famous for his panoramic landscapes and wrote an essay on landscape.

It is in landscape art indeed that the Sung age found the peculiar expression of its genius and reached its greatest achievements. Those works which survive belong almost wholly to Southern Sung.

Buddhist art was undergoing a transformation, with the rise to predominance of the Zen sect, which set no value on rites and ceremonies or even the sacred scriptures, as such; recognizing how easily the human spirit, in emancipating itself from the obvious forms of idolatry, can become enslaved to subtler and less tangible forms of the same thing. It relied on an interior discipline, on intuition, and on wordless communication of the truth.

Religious painting tended now to be less and less occupied with beatific visions of majestic divinities presiding over a remote paradise. The Arhats (the immediate disciples of Buddha), seated in intense contemplation in solitary recesses of the mountains were favourite themes,

[1] See the chapter on this period in Mr. Waley's book.

congenial to that side of the Chinese mind which finds expression in Taoist mysticism; and the Arhats seem sometimes to take on attributes of the Taoist "Immortals," the mountain-dwellers who live on dew and float in air. Portraits of saints and patriarchs began to be more frequent than paintings of the Bodhisattvas. Sakya-muni was less often the glorified Buddha than a suffering man among men.

Of the ostensibly religious art of Sung, however, so little survives that we cannot discuss it to much profit. What is important to note is that a suffusion of the religious spirit informs also the painting of landscape, as of birds and flowers. A famous set of three paintings (corresponding to the "triptych" of Europe) by a late Sung master, is preserved in Japan. The central piece is a Kuanyin; on one side is a crane, on the other side monkeys hanging to a bough. The collocation is typical of an attitude of mind which saw the universe of life as a whole and did not segregate the world of religion as something to be kept sacred and aloof from common things. Something of the spirit which made Blake cry, "Everything that lives is holy," seems to animate the Sung paintings, even when their authors may sometimes have seemed to themselves to be preoccupied only with intent fidelity to nature. For even the "realism" of a certain phrase of Sung art is not our realism. Look at the little album-picture in the Eumorfopoulos collection which we reproduce [PLATE 6]. Nature is not "idealized" in this bird on a bough: yet it is much more than a reflection of nature, or what mere observation can do. Art is concerned with relations rather than with objects. By placing an object in relation to another object, or to mere space, the object becomes transformed; it can change its colour, modify its shape, receive an access of significance. It is a passage from the world of fact into the world of idea. But there are not only these relations within the picture; there is also the relation of the painting to the painter and to the spectator. What is in the painter's unconscious mind goes out into his work and passes from that into the mind of the spectator. Thus when we pass from a typical Sung painting of a flower to a Ming painting, though on the surface there may be no tangible difference to seize, we feel the difference, the loss of import, at once.

I have already alluded to the spacing of Chinese design as its most original factor. Lao Tzu's dwelling on the power of emptiness—the hollow of a clay vessel alone makes it serviceable—gives explicit expression to an inbred tendency of the Chinese mind, which discovered in painting and in poetry the value of reserves and silences, the invitation to imagination in the thing left unexpressed. As formal design we find this developed into a system of spacing which makes of the empty part of a picture not something left over but a vital, an integral element. And along with this we notice that the principle of symmetry is deserted. Western art is haunted by the human form, our supreme motive, with its symmetrical members: but the Chinese, with their eyes turned outward on the world in which man is placed, have looked rather at the tree which, unsymmetrical in its growth, stands in perfect poise.

Landscape, then, in all its implications, becomes the master-motive

TIGER BY A TORRENT IN RAIN AND WIND. Attributed to Mu Ch'i.
Thirteenth century. Ink painting on silk. 60½ in. by 33 in.

WINTER. By Shêng Mou. Fourteenth century. Lower part of an ink painting on silk, 41¾ in. by 19½ in.
(British Museum.)

FAIRY AND PHOENIX. By Wu Wei. (A.D. 1458–1508.) Ink, lightly coloured, on silk. 58 in. by 37½ in.
(British Museum.)

TWO PANELS OF A SCREEN. By Shên Ch'üan (dated 1690).
Colour on silk.

(Collection of Morton H. Sands, Esq.)

of Sung art. But both matter and design differ in the Sung type of landscape from the European type. The Chinese term for landscape, " mountain and water picture," indicates the elements specially chosen from the whole field of nature as themes for contemplation by the artist. We might have expected something different from a people devoted to agriculture from time immemorial. But, whatever the explanation, what we find in their art is a love of wild solitudes, of plunging streams and soaring peaks, with perhaps a few contemplative figures enjoying the wide prospect from their secluded pavilions or mountain retreats. Peaks and torrents seem to fill these painters with a kind of intoxication, as if their spirits were buoyed on the stream of universal life pervading all things, and the transitions of human existence were gladly accepted as part of the flowing, ever-changing world. Hence a singular exhilaration combines with the sense of peace and amplitude induced by these landscapes.

In European art, the spectator is imagined to be on level ground; the mid-distance is cut across by the horizon-line; and to break this, and unite sky and earth, masses of trees, broken, ground, distant hills, supply lines of vertical or diagonal direction. The Chinese convention lifts the spectator above the earth: the high horizon is nearly always filled with mountain-forms, often towering over mist. There is no teasing of detail in the foreground. The eye is led to the grander shapes, the liberating spaces. The mood is loftier than we are wont to feel in landscape art. These characteristics are specially the mark of the later Sung painting, when so many spirits, oppressed by the material misfortunes of the empire, turned inward to reverie and solaced themselves with the delights of solitude.

Ma Yüan and Hsia Kuei are the two landscape masters of Southern Sung who are best known, because the Japanese of Ashikaga times especially admired and collected their works, and these have been religiously preserved and have been reproduced in Japanese publications. But very likely we should still accord them pre-eminence even if we knew the works of their contemporaries, some of whom pursued the old style in blue, green and gold. Ma Yüan painted in ink or in the slightly-coloured style. In the Freer collection at Washington is a magnificent roll [Plate 8]: some critics pronounce it to be a Ming copy; if so, the original must have been even more marvellous. One of Hsia Kuei's masterpieces, a long roll depicting scenes on the Yang-tse, the " River of a Myriad Miles," was lent to the Burlington House Exhibition by the Chinese Government. There are splendid examples both of Ma Yüan and of Hsia Kuei in Japan; and though there is no absolute certainty as to the authenticity of these, we can form from them an adequate idea of the glories of Sung landscape art.

On a more prosaic plane there were long panoramic rolls, of which Chang Tsê-tuan's *Approach to the City* may be taken as a type. Numerous copies of this picture exist; it particularly appealed to the Chinese of later times, as depicting the capital just before its destruction.

Side by side with landscape themes, all kinds of subjects were pursued. Of thirteenth-century portraiture an example is in the British Museum;

unfortunately the contours of the dress have been heavily gone over, so that they no longer suggest the form within. There were also groups of sages or poets; episodes from history; and many other types of figure-subjects, which survive in copies or derivative versions.

Genre subjects and still-life pictures were also much painted.

Later Art.—The Yüan or Mongol dynasty seems to have been marked by a revival of the cult of the antique. The life of art falls to a lower temperature. The accomplished Chao Mêng-fu was an academic artist, who prided himself on his close following of ancient models. There is a fine picture of tethered horses in the British Museum which has been attributed to him, but is probably of later date. Pictures of horses are commonly ascribed to Chao Mêng-fu; these abound in Western collections; but Mr. Waley has pointed out that he painted all kinds of subjects, and other contemporaries were quite as distinguished for their horses. Yen Hui painted Buddhist and Taoist pictures, and stands somewhat apart. To him is ascribed the romantic picture of Sages which we reproduce on Plate 1 (Frontispiece).

This following of old models was even more prevalent in the Ming dynasty; but we miss the "noble simplicity" of Sung, the force and breadth of T'ang. Still, there were fine painters during this period. The British Museum has a masterly monochrome picture of *Wild Geese by a Mountain Stream*, by Lin Liang, perhaps the greatest of the early Ming painters. In the same collection is the *Fairy and Phoenix* [Plate 13], by Wu Wei, who is recorded to have modelled his style on Wu Tao-tzu.

The vast majority of Chinese pictures which one sees date from the Ming period or later. Yet our interest centres on the earlier periods, because the later work is so derivative, so dependent on the inspiration of a past time. Beautiful design, exquisite colour, charming motives, have been transmitted; but not the interior life which, even from the little left to us, the older art exhales. The later art has given to Europe almost all of the floral motives in decoration that it knows; and till recent years it was the decorative element in Chinese art which alone was appreciated, and the influence of which pervades Western "applied art" to an extent not generally realized. Now, when we know that this felicity of design is but the sediment, so to speak, of a creative and expressive art subtly responsive to the movements of the mind and the impulses of imagination, we are confronted with the wastes of history and with but a few wonderful relics from which to divine that lost world.

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Some of these books are now difficult to procure.

CHINESE SCULPTURE

By Osvald Sirén

I. Introduction

WHEN we approach Chinese Sculpture we are apt to do it in a way which was quite foreign to the people who created this type of art. We are accustomed to look upon sculpture as tridimensional representations of human beings, animals or other manifestations of objective life, and we expect that they should be presented in such a way that they transmit convincing impressions of organic forms and movements. Even if the works are not naturalistic in the narrowest sense of the word, their significance is dependent on their relation to the forms of the objective world, and they are appreciated according to our sensory or material experience. The human shape became naturally the ideal motif for this kind of plastic art, the highest standard of beauty and organic life of which the sculptors were conscious.

Such ideals were practically unknown to the Chinese. The human form was never a motif of paramount importance to them. Their greatest sculptures were not done as glorifications of individual beauty, of physical movement or other motives based on material experience. Even when they introduced elements of form drawn from the objective world, their creations were not done in competition with actual living organisms, but as projections from their own minds intended to express or evoke ideas of a more general or spiritual scope.

Their art was essentially conventional. The sculptors felt no ambition to break the traditional symbols or to display some kind of personal originality, but sought rather to enter into the accepted formulae as completely as possible, and to fill them with the greater significance which depends on the intimate connection between the single individual and the universal life. We know this type of art from some of the mediæval sculpture of Europe, but it was carried further in China; the Chinese were quite free from the tendency towards anthropomorphic idealization so characteristic of European art, and they had a stronger feeling for the essential unity which underlies all the changing manifestations of material life.

The great mass of Chinese sculpture represents religious motifs, mainly of Buddhist origin and not infrequently in human form. The

A. *B.*

A—BUDDHIST VOTIVE STELE. Northern Wei period, probably about 500–520.
(Metropolitan Museum, New York.)

B—STANDING BODHISATTVA IN GILT BRONZE. Sui period, shortly before 600.
(Private Collection, Japan.)

A. *B.*

A- ONE OF THE TWO CHIMAERAS ERECTED AT THE TOMB OF THE EMPEROR CH'I WU TI (died 493).
B—PORTRAIT STATUE OF A PRIEST. White marble. T'ang period, before 700.

(Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia.)

Buddha and Bodhisattva ideas are expressed with many variations in the shape of figures placed in postures of symbolic significance, intended to convey different aspects of a spiritual consciousness which pervades the whole universe. They are not to be interpreted as individual beings in the ordinary sense of the word, nor as memory images or idealizations of actual persons who may have existed at some time or other, but as portrayals of consciousness or symbolic indications of the successive stages by which the human nature approaches the divine. In order to become intelligible these symbolic figures had to be made in accordance with certain iconographic formulae which the artist must accept if he wished to be understood. But in the treatment of these traditional motifs he could display something of his own sensibility and feeling for decorative beauty, a more or less free rhythmic transcription of the particular theme. He was at liberty to modify the form, to emphasize certain lines, and particularly to stylize the wide and rich garments in which the figure are draped. The treatment of the mantle folds became of greatest importance from the decorative point of view; they reflect better than any other element the stylistic development, i.e., the more or less manneristic conventions of the successive periods. The facial types and the modelling of the figures were indeed also modified from time to time, but the most definite criterion for a chronological classification of the sculptures is to be found in the design of the folds and the hems of the garments. Yet, however interesting this may seem from the art-historian's point of view, it must be remembered that the decorative transcription was never an end in itself for the Chinese sculptors, or a criterion for the importance of their works. This was rather sought in the reflexion of the spiritual idea or state of consciousness which the work was intended to transmit.

To what extent Chinese sculptors actually succeeded in conveying such immaterial reactions is not for us to decide; the verdict must largely depend on our own attitude towards the problems of religion and art. Formal analyses are here no longer of much value; they must give way to an intuitive penetration similar to that which may be observed among the Orientals themselves. But nobody could deny that this art, when at its best, has the power of awakening a response in unprejudiced beholders quite independent of their knowledge of its historical or iconographic significance.

The above remarks apply of course pre-eminently to the religious statuary, which forms the bulk of Chinese sculpture still existing, but besides this there existed also certain kinds of profane or semi-religious sculpture quite independent of Buddhist ideas. Foremost within this group stand the representations of animals, which were executed during all periods in practically every style, from the most archaic to the most florid, and in metal or wood just as well as in stone or clay. These animal sculptures were indeed not so closely tied by iconographic rules and formulae as the Buddhist statues. They left a much freer scope to the artist's creative interpretation, his search for adequate sculptural renderings of form and movement, but it would be wrong to imagine that they were based on the same kind of close study of Nature as the animal sculptures

of the Renaissance or later times. The Chinese animal sculptures are not naturalistic in the ordinary sense of the word, particularly during the early periods. Most of these animals never existed in the objective world, yet they contain convincing representations of living organisms. They are imbued with the essential ideas of fierceness, watchfulness, strength, agility, or whatever special quality that the case may require, rendered with a sense of style that make them more singnificant than any naturalistic replicas of ordinary animals. They too are symbolic or expressionistic, though in a different way from the religious sculptures, because their inherent ideas are of the physical or animal world, which, however, also forms part of the great mechanism of Nature, and consequently may be represented in a generalized or typical way. The best of these animal sculptures rank as great works of art, not because of any striking resemblance to such animals as we know, but because they take us beyond the confines of our ordinary experiences and observations of Nature.

Another class of secular sculptures in China is made up of minor statuettes in clay, wood or bronze, representing human beings, which were placed in the tombs. Their purpose was to serve as substitutes for relations or retainers of the departed, and they were consequently formed in closer adherence to actual living people than any of the large stone sculptures. Yet most of them are not, strictly speaking, individualized, but characterized as types or representatives of different classes of people, such as dancers, musicians, grooms, falconers, soldiers and the like, and they often form striking illustrations of the daily life and occupations of the Chinese. The majority of the clay statuettes were cast in moulds and produced in series, but there are exceptions which apparently were modelled by hand or at least retouched by an artist after casting, and these certainly reach the level of real plastic art. They are the best examples of how far the Chinese were able to use the plastic form as a means of spontaneous artistic expression and individual characterization, and they are certainly not inferior in this respect to corresponding clay figurines from any Western country. They were not made according to definite iconographic formulae like the religious sculptures, yet their very striking naturalistic features are subject to a stylization which reflects the genius of the Chinese in much the same way that we find it expressed in the Buddhist figures and the animal statues. The development of style is just as evident within this group of minor sculptures as in the larger works mentioned above, and the best among them could be enlarged almost to life size without loss of artistic significance. It is interesting to note here a certain similarity between the latter group of figures and the "Ushabtis" which were placed in the Egyptian tombs. These served much the same purpose as the Chinese figures and were, no doubt, evolved along very similar lines.

In addition to the different kinds of sculpture mentioned above it should be remembered that the Chinese also made certain portrait statues of priests or holy men [Plate 16,b] intended to represent, or even to act as proxies, for these venerable characters at the occasion of memorial

services or religious ceremonies in their honour. They may be classified as religious sculptures, but they are individually characterized and not subject to the traditional Buddhist formulae. Sometimes they were made in stone, but more often—particularly during later periods, when they became more frequent—in wood, clay or dry lacquer, materials which evidently were better suited than stone for obtaining striking naturalistic effects. They do occasionally approach Western sculpture more than any other kind of Chinese statues, yet they have little in common with those heroic statues or busts of emperors and statesmen which hold such a prominent place in European art. Here again it is less the personality of the departed which is perpetuated than certain typical features or ideas for which he stands as a symbol, and it sometimes happens that the countenance of a historical person is used for the representation of a divine or a semi-divine being.

The difficulty for Westerners to appreciate Chinese sculpture depends not only on its highly conventionalized character and its background of quite foreign religious or cultural traditions, but also on what might be called the *spiritus loci* of the Chinese monuments. Most of the larger stone sculptures were made for definite places and meant to be seen in certain architectural or natural surroundings. The Buddhist figures were hewn out of the living rock in the cave-temples or placed in dimly lighted sanctuaries, if not in outside niches on the pagodas. They were rarely seen in a sharp light or at close range, but more or less as apparitions produced by Nature and man in conjunction. The large animal statues stood as guardians at the gateways or along the "spirit paths" leading up to the enclosures of kingly tombs. They were seen against the huge pyramidal mounds or the wide horizon of open landscape, where the shifting light and shadows imbued their fantastic forms with a mysterious life. Nobody who has seen one of these winged lions or chimæras [PLATE 16,A] rising out of the high grass of the field, twinkling and grinning as the sun passes over its eyes could deny that its meaning and life are enhanced by its situation in the landscape.

When these ancient monuments, be they guardian animals, Buddhist cave sculptures or large memorial stelae, are removed from their original setting for which they were created and in which they lived, they are usually not only mutilated but also divested of their original atmosphere. Most of them do not fit into the cold and even light of modern museums. Something of their original significance vanishes, and they become simply more or less interesting examples of the stonemason's craft. They impress us by their style, but seldom by any such refinement of modelling and technical execution as we are wont to find in the classic sculptures of Europe. No wonder then that they often disappoint the Western beholder, who looks upon them from his own habitual point of view. But those who have seen these sculptures in their homeland, in the mountain caves, at the abandoned tombs or in the dilapidated temples, will admit that they signify infinitely more at those distant places than in Western museums or private collections. It is a matter of deepest regret to all friends of ancient China that so many of these original homes or

refuges of early Chinese sculpture are nowadays completely emptied of their treasures!

The case is of course quite different in regard to the minor portable sculptures in bronze, clay or wood. They did not grow out of definite surroundings in the same strict sense as the stone monuments, and they can consequently be shown to advantage even in modern interiors. Their technical execution is often very fine; some of the small Buddhist statuettes and animals in gilt bronze may almost be compared to jewellers' works. They are cast and chiselled and burnished with gold and often have taken on a very rich and beautiful patina. The elegance or purity of their style is heightened by exquisite decorative qualities, which appeal to the modern beholder. The clay figures, on the other hand, are as a rule more mechanical products; only the very best among them, as said before, can be classified as works of art. These may be fresh and spontaneous like sketches in clay (as proved by some specimens of the Han period), or very carefully worked like models for great monuments (as may be seen in some riders of the T'ang dynasty [PLATE 17],) and they can hardly fail to interest students who look for free and unrestrained expressions of movement and form.

II. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The historical evolution of Chinese sculpture may be followed through a great abundance of monuments spread all over Northern China and in many collections in Japan, America and Europe. The material is so rich and many-sided that it is impossible to give even the barest outline of it in a few pages; we can do no more than mention a few examples of the successive periods which may serve to illustrate the main stages in the stylistic evolution.*

The earliest Chinese sculptures known to-day are some birds and animals and a fragmentary human figure in whitish limestone which have been excavated at An-yang in tombs of the Yin dynasty (*ca.* 1200 B.C.). They may have served as parts of sacrificial objects or of the architectural fitting of the tombs. The plastic treatment is quite summary, yet the forms and postures emerge quite expressively out of the block-like masses. Most remarkable is the human figure (9 inches high) which is represented in a squatting posture with the arms around the knees; the head, which now is missing, rose evidently above this rather cubic form which gives the impression of some sort of a support or a pedestal. There are other more

* For a more complete treatment of the stylistic evolution in the sculptural art of China I have to refer the reader to my larger works on the subject: "Chinese Sculpture from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century," Vols. I-IV (London: 1925), and "A History of Early Chinese Art," Vol. III, "Sculpture" (London: 1930).

Further materials for the study of Chinese sculpture are to be found particularly in the following publications:

E. Chavannes: "Mission Archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale." Paris: 1909. (Most important for the earliest periods.)

V. Ségalen, G. de Voisins et J. Lartigue: "Mission Archéologique en Chine, Atlas," Tomes I-II. Paris: 1924. (Splendid illustrations of animal sculptures and tomb monuments.)

Tokiwa and Sekino: "Shina Bukkyo Shiseki" (Buddhist Monuments in China), Vols. I-V. Japanese text. A résumé of the text to Vols. I-III also in English. Tokyo: 1925-30. (Important for the Buddhist sculptures.)

ARCHER ON HORSEBACK
Glazed Tomb Statuette. T'ang period, shortly before 700.
(Private Collection, Stockholm.)

THE COLOSSAL BUDDHA IN A CAVE AT YÜN-KANG. End of fifth century.

purely ornamental carvings in stone from the same place representing rams' [PLATE 18,A and B] or t'ao t'ieh heads, which probably have been attached to large vessels. They form close parallels to similar motifs executed in high relief on many of the bronze vessels excavated at An-yang.

The sculptures made at this early period were evidently subservient to decorative purposes, and if one wants to study the plastic motifs and their stylistic interpretation one has to turn to the sacrificial vessels which form the bulk of the artistic legacy of the Yin and Chou periods. They are decorated with geometrically conventionalized zoömorphic designs, sometimes provided with animal statuettes, such as tigers and bulls, resting on the lid or the handles of the vessel. But there are also complete vessels formed into the shape of highly expressionistic animals or birds: elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers and owls, which, in spite of the fact that they are covered by conventionalized ornaments, retain a strong sculptural character. They reflect the essential ideas of these various motifs: the monumental massiveness of the elephant, the sinuous agility of the tiger, the haughty bearing of the owls, etc., transformed by a structural stylistic interpretation.

Besides such representations of animals in bronze there are also human figures, sometimes in combination with the beasts and sometimes free-standing. They are usually represented in a kneeling posture holding with both hands in front of them small tubes which apparently have served for supporting candles or torches to light the tombs [PLATE 18,C]. The figures are completely covered by long and tight garments, and there is hardly any insistence on the organic structure, but certain details, such as the feet and the belt with hook and dagger, may be quite exact, and the heads are interesting by their strange facial types, so unlike the types of later Chinese representations. The round protruding eyes, the very broad nose and the thin mouth are more like the features of certain early Central American figures than Chinese, strictly speaking, a correspondence which may be counted among the many signs which point towards a common origin of early Chinese and Central American art. As these Chinese statuettes may be dated four or five hundred years B.C. and the American sculptures known at present are hardly older than the third or fourth century A.D., all attempts to explain the correspondence by a direct contact or influence seem futile. We are thrown back on the supposition that similar traditions of style or artistic disposition prevailed in these parts of the world up to a certain date. But the question of their common origin is as yet beyond the range of our historical knowledge.

In China these early traditions were gradually lost and superseded by more powerful influences at the beginning of the Han period. China came then into closer contact with the Western world, the Græco-Scythian art and whatever remained of the old civilizations of Assyria and Babylonia. The animal sculptures of the Han period, whether small bronzes or large stone monuments, reveal an entirely new approach to the artistic problems, a stylistic interpretation which has little in common with the style of the Yin and Chou animals. The Han lions [PLATE 19,A] are late descendants of those proud beasts which stood at the palaces in Babylon, in Susa and Per-

sepolis. The influence may have been transmitted by minor Bactrian sculptures in bronze or clay, and also by those zoömorphic bronze ornaments which were produced by the nomadic tribes of Central Asia.

There must have existed a great number of such stone lions placed as guardians at the princely tombs of the Han period. The only ones which still remain *in situ*, though turned over in the mud, are the lions at the tomb of the Wu family, near Chia-hsiang, in Shantung, erected about A.D. 147. More important from an artistic point of view are, however, the somewhat larger lion statues belonging to Mr. Edgar Worch [PLATE 19,A] and to the Italian Government (formerly in the Gualino Collection). All these lions and many smaller ones in bronze may be said to continue the Assyrio-Babylonian tradition of style. Their proud and monumental appearance depends primarily on the immense neck, which is carried so far forward to the head that it almost appears to continue into the open jaws. The legs are broken, but by the excellent modelling of the body and the emphasis on the joints of the shoulders and loins one gets a convincing impression of the muscular strength and mobility of the animal.

The somewhat later guardian animals in the shape of winged lions and chimæras which stand (or stood) at the tombs of members of the Ch'i and Liang dynasties, in the neighbourhood of Nanking and Tan-yang, and consequently date from the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth centuries, show a more fantastic, purely decorative interpretation of the motif in closer accordance with Chinese traditions. The supple winged bodies, high curving necks and horned dragon heads of the chimæras are all covered by ornamental scales and feathers as if they could soar through the air just as well as speed over the earth, but their artistic, expression depends mainly on the energy and tension which pervade the linear rhythm of the bodies. The curve of the high neck and the bulging chest together with the huge wide-open jaws give them an air of incomparable proudness and ferocity. The winged lions at the tombs of some Liang dukes at Yao Hua Mên [PLATE 19,B] and Kan Yu Hsiang (near Nanking) are of heavier build, more massively monumental but nevertheless also expressive of animal power in a state of highest tension. It seems as if they had come to a sudden standstill in their majestic gait; the colossal head is thrown back, and out of the open jaws hangs an enormous tongue ready to lick blood. The lion character is emphasized by the short mane, which is treated like a solid curving wing on both sides of the head. Whatever foreign influences may have inspired the Chinese to such monumental creations, it is evident that these were thoroughly digested and combined with the indigenous traditions of style. Few monuments offer more convincing evidence of the artistic genius of the Chinese in the field of sculpture.

According to a statement in the Annals of the Former Han Dynasty, Buddhist sculptures were produced in China at the beginning of the third century, when Emperor Hsien Ti (190—220) ordered the erection of some temples and their decoration with gilded statues, but no such early works have been preserved. The earliest dated examples of Buddhist imagery in China known at present are some bronze statuettes of the years 429,

437, 444 and 451 and two slightly larger votive stelae in stone dated 457 and 460. They represent seated or standing Buddhas according to a rather schematic formula derived from Indian images of the Kushana and Gupta periods. But this influence from the homeland of Buddhism was transmitted to China mainly by the people of Central Asia, who had no great artistic ambition; the models seem to have been of a very simple kind. Others—possibly more artistic models—may have been brought in by the southern sea-route through Funan (Kambodia), but their importance for the development of Chinese sculpture is nowadays difficult to gauge, since the Buddhist images from southern China have been destroyed with one or two rather insignificant exceptions. The earliest religious sculptures that still may be seen in China are all products of an art that was transformed in Central Asia; the closest parallels to them are clay and wooden images found in ancient Bactria (Afghanistan) and at the oases of the Gobi desert.

This Central Asian style is also predominating in some of the earliest sculptures in the cave temples at Yün-kang, in northern Shansi, which were executed about the middle of the fifth century. The great Buddha, who rose to a height of almost 15 metres over the ground [PLATE 20], is an enormous enlargement of the same type that may be observed in the small bronze statuettes; the face is quite conventional, the stylization of the mantle folds, in creases which spread like forks over the arm, is extremely schematic and gives the impression of a rather senseless transformation of a mode of draping that may originally have been developed in Indian wooden images. Several large figures at Yün-kang are executed according to the same pattern, but there are also representatives of a different style, thinner and frailer figures enveloped in wide mantles with plaited folds drawn out in wing-like lobes. The contrast between the two types is quite striking, although they may be practically of the same date. The latter figures reveal a feeling for linear rhythm and abstract expressionistic beauty which may be found in all the best Chinese sculptures of the fifth and sixth centuries, and thus may be considered a most essential feature of the indigenous Chinese style.

The same abstract linear mode of transmitting sculptural form may also be seen in some of the famous cave temples at Lung-mên, in Honan, which, however, have been so thoroughly vandalized during the last twenty years that very few of the original statues remain *in situ*. Formerly there were some extremely fine archaic sculptures in the Lao-chün cave, at Lung-mên, executed in a harder stone than at Yün-kang: tall and elegant Boddhisattvas with narrow waists, long necks and large crowned heads, draped in mantles which spread out like pointed wings on the sides, accentuating rather than concealing the angular forms of the bodies. These exquisite creations may indeed be compared with the best archaic sculptures from the Western world, and they have the additional charm of an inscrutable introspective expression.

Besides these cave sculptures, which were hewn out of the living rock, a great number of votive stelae were made at this early epoch and placed in temples or pagodas. Their size is varying (the largest being 5 to 6

metres high), and the figures are more or less free-standing in front of niches or ornamental haloes in low relief. The general characteristics to style are the same as in the contemporary cave sculptures, i. e., a very strict linear transformation of the mantle folds in accordance with a rather definite pattern of long concave curves and zig-zag ornaments (at the hems). The framing borders around the figures are filled with acanthus scrolls or palmette, probably derived from Græco-Iranian sources, whereas the large haloes usually have flaming border-ornaments reflecting a very energetic rhythm. The most definitely Chinese elements on many of these votive stelae are, however, the intercoiled dragons which form an arch over the top. Their ancestors are not to be found in Indian Buddhist art, but in the earlier ornamental art of China.

The archaic style prevailed in the religious sculpture of China until the middle of the sixth century. Then, with the beginning of the Northern Ch'i (550—577) and Northern Chou (557—581) dynasties, certain stylistic modifications set in, and these were carried still further during the short Sui dynasty (589—618), when a great quantity of Buddhist sculpture was produced. It may be that the modifications to some extent were connected with the political changes and the weakening of the inter-communications with Central Asia, but they were also the result of a gradual maturing of Chinese sculptural art, a growing independence and self-consciousness. In a general way it may be said that the figures acquire more roundness and body, the linear stylization is relaxed, though the contours and mantle folds still retain a definite decorative rhythm and the archaic smile is more or less relaxed. As this process comes to maturity the archaic reminiscences are gradually lost and the plastic form acquires a growing importance at the expense of the linear rhythm, as becomes evident in the sculptures of the Sui dynasty.

Prominent examples of the transition style may be seen in some of the cave temples at T'ien-lung Shan, in Shansi, if these have not been mutilated in the last three or four years, when destructive activity has been particularly rife at this place. The enthroned Buddhas in cave XIV [Plate 23,A] are well-modelled figures draped in thin mantles according to Indian fashion with the one shoulder bare. Their heavy bodies, narrowing at the waist, and full faces remind us also of Gupta sculptures more than of traditional Chinese Buddhas; it seems almost as if some direct influences had found their way from India to T'ien-lung Shan. The Bodhisattvas and monks who stand in adoration on both sides of the Buddha are more simple pillar-like figures of Chinese type.

Another important group of sculptures in the transition style is made up of the marble statues from the western part of Hupeh. Their well-rounded forms are enveloped in mantles which fit the body closely, while the folds are rendered as very thin long, diagonal creases. The most beautiful among them, which may be dated into the Sui period, are no longer pillar-like or cylindrical, but slightly ovoid; the contours swell somewhat over the hips and elbows and are gradually drawn together towards the feet and the head. The ovoid formula is also to some extent visible in the arrangement of the mantle-folds, and is repeated on a smaller

MINOR BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS PLACED IN NICHES ON THE WALL OF THE LAO CHÜN CAVE AT LUNG MEN. Shortly before 500.

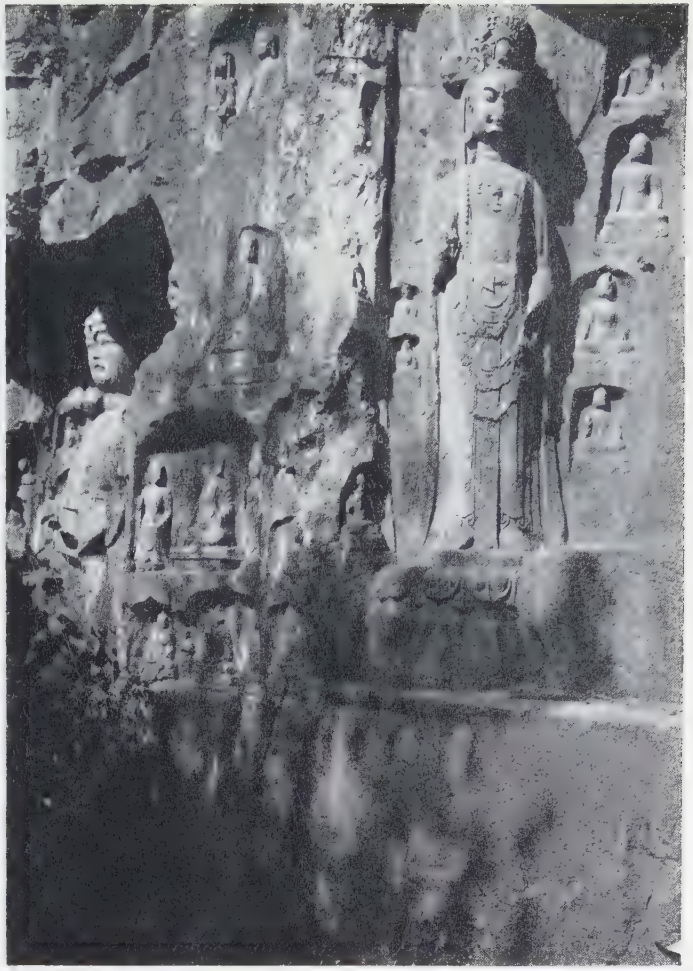
A.

B.

A—SEATED BUDDHA IN A NICHE DECORATED WITH THE SEVEN BUDDHAS OF THE PAST AND ADORING FIGURES. Cave sculpture at Yün-Kang. End of fifth century.

B—BUDDHIST VOTIVE STELE DATED A.D. 528. *(Messrs. C. T. Loo & Co., Paris.)*

A.



B.

A—SÂKYAMUNI BUDDHA ON THE LOTUS THRONE, ACCOMPANIED BY BODHISATTVAS AND BIKSHUS.
Cave 14 at T'ien lung Shan. Sui period, about 600.

B—STANDING BODHISATTVA AND VARIOUS OTHER BUDDHIST FIGURES IN NICHES AT YÜN MÊN SHAN, SHANTUNG. End of Sui period.

A.

B.

C.

A—STANDING BODHISATTVA FROM LUNG MÊN. T'ang period. End of the seventh century.
(Formerly in the possession of M. Grosjean, Peking.)

B—THE COLOSSAL VAIROCHANA BUDDHA, EXECUTED 672–676, AT LUNG MÊN.

C—PRAYING MONK. Statue in white marble from Hupeh Province. Probably eleventh century.
(The General Munthe Collection deposited in the Museum of Los Angeles.)

scale in the heads. These marble statues from Hupeh, which nowadays are to be seen in many Western collections, are technically as well as stylistically typical representatives of the Sui formula for plastic art. Somewhat different interpretations of the same decorative device may be studied in the cave sculptures at T'o Shan and Yün-mên Shan, in Shantung, also executed during the Sui dynasty. The T'o Shan sculptures are relatively traditional in accordance with the above-mentioned formula, but those at Yün-mên Shan constitute something of a surprise, because the plastic form is here treated in a broader manner with stronger contrasts of light and shade than we find in other sculptures of the same period [PLATE 23,B]. They lead quite naturally over to the mature art of the T'ang dynasty (618—906), which, however, seldom reveals the same degree of purely sculptural beauty.

It may thus be said that there is no very definite line of division between the art of the Sui and of the T'ang period, yet a certain modification of the sculptural style gradually becomes evident—a growing dependence on Indian models. These may have entered in increasing numbers with the Chinese pilgrims who undertook the long journey overland to India and back. Most famous among them was the Buddhist monk Hsüan Chuang, "the Master of the Law," who returned (645) to the Chinese capital, bringing with him from India a load of sacred writings and seven images in gold and sandalwood which were reproductions of famous Buddha statues. And there were many other images of a similar kind which served as models to the Chinese sculptors.

Their influence may be observed in some Chinese sculptures from the middle of the seventh century, as, for instance, a pair of Bodhisattvas in the Philadelphia University Museum. These figures stand no longer in a stiff posture with the weight of the body equally distributed on both feet, as formerly was the case, but slightly bending one leg and leaning over to the side so that the body forms a double curve, a movement which is caught up in the inclination of the head. The waist is quite narrow and the customary crown is replaced by a high headdress whereby the figures acquire a feminine appearance, although iconographically they represent male creatures. The same elegant posture still further developed is characteristic of some Bodhisattva statues from the caves at Lung-mên, where the activity was continued during the latter half of the seventh century. They are Indian in bearing and dress, but their facial types are rather Chinese, expressing more power than grace.

The seated Buddhas of this period are somewhat heavier and broader figures, enveloped in wide mantles which fall down in copious folds over the high lotus pedestals. Most of them are rather conventional and lacking in structural from, but sometimes the modelling of the body as well as the garment reveal great tactile beauty. As an example may be mentioned the headless Buddha in the Boston Museum executed in yellowish marble [PLATE 25,A]. The mantle is draped in Indian fashion over the one shoulder; the soft cloth lies close upon the ample torso and the crossed legs. The folds are slightly conventionalized, but in a very soft and fluent fashion. There is a suggestion of quivering light and shade which

seem to penetrate into the weathered surface of the yellowish marble. It is the work of an artist who really felt the beauty of the seated body in complete repose.

The very large statues on the open terrace rising above the river at Lung-mên express in the most monumental form the religious pathos of mature T'ang art. This applies especially to the central figure, a colossal Vairochana Buddha [PLATE 24,B], which according to the inscription was executed between 672 and 676. The lateral figures, two Bodhisattvas, two bikshus (monks) and four guardians, are somewhat short and clumsy with disproportionately large heads. The great central figure has suffered much from the ravages of time and man, the hands have been broken off, and the lower part of the body is worn and chipped, but one wonders whether it ever made a more majestic impression than now, when it rises quite free on the open terrace, uncovered by any cave. The destruction has not yet reached the shoulders, the head is still (or was a few years ago) well preserved, dominating more than ever. But for how long? Practically all the other figures of some artistic merit at Lung-mên have been destroyed or mutilated. When the head of this giant falls the grandest symbol of the religious fervour which inspired the creation of the numerous cave temples, with their imposing array of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will be gone. They were made as *monumenta aere perennius*, but even such monuments are no longer safe when cupidity grows stronger than man's faith in spiritual ideals.

The sculptural activity of the T'ang period was by no means confined to religious subjects; a great deal of profane sculpture was also produced, and one may speak about a growing tendency to treat the religious statues in a less hieratic manner than previously had been the case. The restraint and serenity of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas give way to a striving for movement and expression, the figures begin to bend, to turn on the hips, to look sideways and upwards, even to move forward, to act and look more like beings of the human world. A certain amount of naturalism filters into the religous sculpture during the eighth century, but it finds, of course, still more evident expression in the portrait statues of priests, in the animal sculptures and in the clay statuettes of servants and musicians made for the tombs. There are heads characterized with almost the same incisive realism as we know from Roman busts and figures draped in the fashion of classical orators. Chinese sculpture might indeed have achieved similar results to European art of antiquity if it had followed such lines of development more consistently and not devoted its best energies to more abstract modes of representation. When, as in these portrait statues or in such animal sculptures as the six large reliefs representing the Emperor T'ang Tai Tsung's battle chargers, the abstraction gave way to a more immediate approach to Nature, the results became unerringly true and convincing. The style is still of a decisively monumental type, the shapes are unified and the naturalistic features subject to a definite decorative rhythm or design; it is only in the later works that the sculptural form becomes dissolved into more fleeting effects of light and shade and the style takes on a more baroque aspect. It may be said

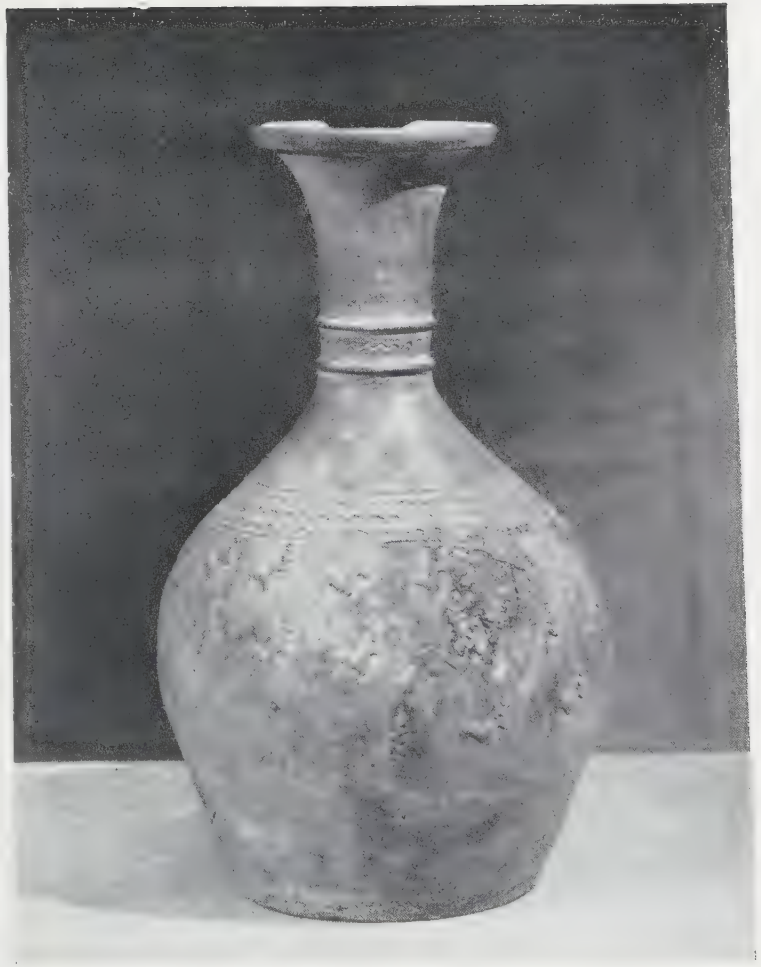
A.

B.

A—TORSO OF A SEATED BUDDHA ON A HIGH PEDESTAL. Yellowish marble. T'ang period.
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)

B—KUANYIN BODHISATTVA IN THE MAHARAJALILA POSTURE. Wooden sculpture of the Chin period. Probably about 1200.
(The Miss Buckingham Collection in the Art Institute of Chicago.)

A—JAR. Porcellanous stoneware.
Third century A.D. or later.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)



B—VASE of porcellanous stoneware. Third century A.D.
(Musée du Louvre, Paris.)

that sculpture loses more and more of its original importance and becomes subservient to the art of painting.

This change takes place during the Sung dynasty (960—1280), and particularly in the northern part of the country, which since the beginning of the twelfth century was under the sway of the Chin or Tartar dynasty. A great deal of religious sculpture was produced here at the time, though less in stone than in wood, clay, dry lacquer and iron, materials which more easily yielded to the striving for pictorial effects, particularly when they were treated with colour. The compositions are evidently often derived from paintings, as, for instance, the very popular Bodhisattvas seated on rocky ledges in the so-called *lalita-sana* posture (with one knee raised), or the figures placed against backgrounds, which are treated like mountain landscapes, with trees, buildings, animals and small human figures. In compositions of this type the approach to painting is dangerously close, and even when they are skilfully executed—which is by no means always the case—it may be said that they no longer reveal any such qualities as are essential to real sculpture.

* *For a brief note of the principal Reference Works on CHINESE SCULPTURE, v. footnote to p. 20.*

CERAMICS

By Bernard Rackham

IT is probably no exaggeration to say that, during the present century, knowledge of China and its people and understanding of their philosophy and art have made greater progress in the West than in the whole course of the ages that went before. The history and affairs of the Middle Kingdom were formerly the concern of none but a few travellers or specialists. Now they are a subject of interest to an ever-growing number of eager investigators. This change has come about chiefly as a result of the rapid development of intercourse between China and the West which followed the opening of the overland route through Siberia. This event not only made it possible for a greater number of Western travellers to visit the Far East than ever before. It was the cause also of a remarkable subsidiary consequence, due to the spread of railways in China itself, particularly in the Northern provinces, which were the heart of the Empire in early times. The disturbance of the soil occasioned by engineering works yielded a wealth of tangible evidence of a culture formerly known almost exclusively from literary sources. It now became possible to appreciate as never before, not only the literature, philosophy and history, but also the art of ancient China.

Western connoisseurs were not slow to recognize the opportunities thus afforded of surrounding themselves with works of beauty of a kind until then almost wholly unknown to them, and the plundering activities of those who cater for their tastes threatened to leave China, like Greece, Egypt and other homes of ancient civilization, stripped almost bare of the finest works of the craftsmen of old. The words of an Egyptian statesman to his cicerone in the galleries of a famous museum—"Que vous avez volé mon pays!"—might well be echoed by Chinese lips. Deplorable as, from some points of view, this turn of events might seem, it has seemed at times doubtful whether these treasures of ancient art would be as carefully and safely preserved in China itself as they are in the hands of Western collectors and museums.

Of all branches of Chinese art from the Han period onwards, that is, from about the beginning of the Christian era, pottery is that which provides to the student the fullest and most readily procurable material, in tangible form, for following the changing phases of Chinese thought. Architecture and sculpture are difficult of access, and have, to a large extent, perished with the lapse of years. Early paintings, still more destructible must be studied, generally speaking, from later copies. Bronzes and other works in metal survive, but are too severely confined by technical limitations to illustrate freely the spirit of their time. Pottery,

VASE, EARTHENWARE, WITH DECORATION INCISED THROUGH A WHITE SLIP AND PAINTED IN COLOURED GLAZES. T'ang Dynasty.

(*British Museum.*)

BULB-BOWL, PORCELAIN. WITH "TRANSMUTATION" RED GLAZE. MARKED WITH THE INCISED NUMERAL *lu* (6). Chün Chou, Sung Dynasty
(*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

A—JAR. Drab stoneware, with thick white glaze.
Probably Sung Dynasty.
(*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

B—FUNERAL VASE. Green glazed earthenware. Han Dynasty.
(*Collection of Oscar Raphael, Esq.*)

A—STONEWARE JAR, painted in brown-black on a white slip, under clear creamy-white glaze. Height 15½ in. Made at Tz'ŭ-chou in Chihli. Sung Dynasty.

B—PORCELAIN VASE, with celadon glaze. Lung ch'üan. Sung Dynasty.
(*Collection of Oscar Raphael, Esq.*)

on the other hand, is as durable as it is easy to obtain and carry. An earthen vase is easily broken, but its material with difficulty destroyed.

Pottery is, moreover, capable of almost infinite variety of treatment in form and decoration. As a means of expressing the sense of beauty in shape, it is akin to sculpture, or rather to that part of sculpture that ought rather to be called "plastic" (it is characteristic of the English attitude towards art that whereas "logic," "rhetoric," "arithmetic," and a few others have long been naturalized strangers, "plastic" as a noun still lingers without our gates). Whether the hands alone are used in the fashioning, or the wheel is called to their aid, pottery remains first and foremost a plastic art, no less than that representational craft of the modeller in clay or wax which is so commonly thought of as sculpture. Nowhere can beauty of form be better seen than in the subtle loveliness of curve which, better than any other, the sensitive Chinese potter had the skill to translate into visible and tangible form. In his wonderful tomb figures, moreover, —children of the furnace no less than the food vessels and ewers with which they are found interred—we come to the very border-line of sculpture.

But it is not by form alone that pottery makes its effect. The sense of colour also finds in it satisfaction for all its moods. The quiet and sombre serenity of bronze can be matched in the soft browns and greys among the early monochrome glazes, whilst no picture or fresco can offer rich harmonies of colour so splendid or so lasting as those of the Ming glaze-painted porcelains. This splendour of hue became, as the means of achieving it were sought for and mastered, the chief glory of Chinese pottery; the resultant beauties came to replace the qualities of mere form and line which are the means of appeal in the earlier wares.

It is curious to reflect that the supremacy in their art which few would deny to the potters of China was reached by them at a late stage in the history of civilization. The wares made in China before the time of the Christian era belong to the category of what is termed "primitive," and are often passed over as being merely of ethnographical interest. Variety they certainly do not show, but such simple forms as are exhibited by the unglazed ash-grey wares of the Chou dynasty are dignified and pure, and it may be questioned whether the collector, as a rule, does justice to their qualities. As far as pottery technique is concerned, however, they are not of a very advanced order, and it was only in the succeeding Han period that any great artistic progress was made by the Chinese potters. By this time their fellow-craftsmen of Western Asia, Egypt and Greece had already behind them many centuries of accomplishment, whilst other artificers of their own country, notably the workers in bronze, had also a long priority in technical attainment. This being so, it is not surprising that the earlier Chinese earthenwares from Han onwards show marked traces alike of Western influence and of metal technique.

The wares of the Han dynasty, even if we do not accept the views of certain scholars who would give to a later date those green and brown glazed wares which have hitherto generally been classed as Han—are not of the greatest interest from the purely ceramic point of view, for the

very reason that they are so strongly influenced by bronze [PLATE 29,B]. In their massive and noble forms, however, they already display the dignified proportions and beauty of contour which are the mark of the more important Chinese pottery vases even down to the times of decadence. The same is true of a small class of wares which are generally attributed to a period about the end of the Han dynasty or immediately after, exemplified by a vase [PLATE 26,A] in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Technically these wares are of importance, as they mark the first advance towards porcelain. The material is here no longer the red or grey earthenware, with or without a lead glaze, familiar in the generality of the Han pottery; it is a hard-fired resonant body in which the constituents of porcelain have already appeared, rusty-brown on the surface where not protected by glaze. The shape is essentially a potter's shape, with strongly accented horizontal wheel-marks. If the handles are a take-over from bronze, the wavy combing in the neck and the continuous swaying lines of the bird's-head motives scratched on the shoulder are a most legitimate form of pottery decoration.

Figure-modelling in pottery, in which the Chinese have never been surpassed, begins already in the Han times. To the Northern Wei dynasty, which came to an end in 550, are ascribed certain figures in unglazed grey earthenware which, for all their naivety, often show a wonderful keenness of observation and skill in the seizing of essentials; a small figure of a running litter-bearer in the Victoria and Albert Museum well illustrates these excellencies. When the classic period of T'ang is reached, the potters are working with the easy mastery of artists in their craft. From the scores of genuine specimens that have been brought out of China we have become so familiar with the tomb-figures of this period that we are apt to forget the extraordinary level of attainment which they indicate. Some are perhaps clumsy and ungainly, few have any special pretensions to be singled out as great masterpieces of art, but a very large proportion are entitled to the respect with which, when they were first revealed to us, they were hailed as works of uncommon power and distinction. If these figures of men and demons, horses, camels and cattle were all that was left to us of T'ang art, they would alone be enough to stamp their era as one in which artistic conception and craftsmanship stood at a level attained only here and there in the history of human culture.

Much has been written of the statues of Lohan in glazed pottery, of which the finest is now in the British Museum, and there would be no occasion to add to these references here, were it not that the authenticity of these statues as examples of T'ang art has been questioned in favour of an attribution to the Ming period. No shred of evidence has been brought forward in support of what is no more than an opinion. Unprejudiced judges will find, on the other hand, much that is in favour of the earlier dating. If these statues are to be transferred to Ming, so also must the would-be T'ang vessels as well as the figures that have come to us from tombs. All show the same technique, the same glaze colourings, even the same patterns (witness the flowers on the drapery of the British Museum Lohan, which can be closely paralleled on many vases and dishes

A.

B.

A—MINIATURE JAR AND *OENOCHOE* WITH BROWN AND GREEN GLAZES.
T'ang Dynasty.
B—BOTTLE MOULDED WITH BACCHANALIAN FIGURES, GREENISH-BROWN GLAZE.
T'ang Dynasty.

(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

A—VASE, PORCELAIN. Painted in colours.
About 1500. Heigh 5 $\frac{6}{8}$ in.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

B—COVER. Cream-coloured porcelain.
Ting ware. Sung Dynasty. Diameter 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

C—BOWL, PORCELAIN, COVERED WITH A CREAM-COLOURED GLAZE.
Ting type. Sung Dynasty. Diameter 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

from the tombs). On the other side, we have many inscribed tablets said to have been found in the same tomb with sets of figures (we need mention only that in the British Museum from the Eumorfopoulos Collection with the name of Chancellor Liu T'ing-hsün, who died in 728), and even if the statements as to such association are not to be accepted as worthy of belief, we have still the wares,—identical in type with the tomb-wares,—deposited at Nara in Japan in the eighth century. We have the close similarity in style between the pottery Lohan and sculpture in stone of unquestioned T'ang origin. We have amongst the yield of the tombs, pottery vessels such as the miniature *œnochoe* (its form is precisely indicated by this name) and the pilgrim-bottle with Bacchanalian figures among vines [PLATE 31,A and B], in which Hellenistic influences are plainly apparent, influences which would be incredible if they first became manifest as late as the fourteenth century. The nearest Ming parallel to the figures in dispute is perhaps to be found in two large statuettes of standing Buddhist priests formerly in the Benson Collection. These have a dignity of bearing and a reticence in their rendering which set them far above the average of pottery figures of their time. They also show the green and yellow colouring which predominates in the tomb figures. But their material, as well as the quality of their glazes, differs entirely from that of their analogues, as indeed does the whole spirit in which they are conceived.

With the T'ang period comes for the first time in Chinese pottery a wider range of colour. To illustrate this a piece from the British Museum has been chosen for reproduction [PLATE 27]. It exemplifies a technique which has been effectively used in glazed pottery in widely distant times and places, as in the later Chinese wares of the Ming dynasty, in mediæval, Persian ware and in the *Hafnerkeramik* of the German renaissance. Glazes used as pigments are kept to their appointed places in a design by the simple expedient of scratching the outlines deeply into the soft clay, and thus providing bounds by which the glazes, as a rule, were satisfactorily confined during their fusion in the kiln.

A further wide expansion of craftsmanship is shown by the manifold variety of wares of the Sung period. Nor did technique advance at the expense of aesthetic worth. It would be hard to point to a Sung pot that could be called ugly. The craftsmen of this age must have been encompassed by beauty as by the air they breathed. To them purity of curve, well-ordered balance of proportion, and fresh vigour of drawing were as easy and natural as practical good craftsmanship in their handiwork. They may have been half savages, as we reckon things in these materialistic days; their table manners doubtless left much to be desired. But spiritually they were great. Their work remains to prove it. A Ting bowl [PLATE 32, C] or a Tz'u-chou vase [PLATE 34] shows the same clearness of conception, the same sincerity, unerring ease, and economic employment of means in translating it for the eye to see, that strikes the beholder in the best work of Christian art in its great phases.

In dealing with the Sung wares we are confronted with a multiplicity of texts from which we learn much as to the sites of kilns and even the

names of those who operated them. But when the archaeologist tries to match with these names the wares that have been preserved to our time his difficulties begin. The riddle propounded by Monsieur Paul Pelliot with regard to the *temmoku* or T'ien-mu tea-bowls, assumed to come from Fukien, is typical. He tells us that he can find no T'ien-mu in Fukien and that a T'ien-mu in Chekiang province was famed for its tea, but it is not recorded to have made bowls to contain it. Questions such as these, however, would be quite beyond the scope of this article and have, fortunately, little bearing on the aesthetic appreciation of the wares concerned.

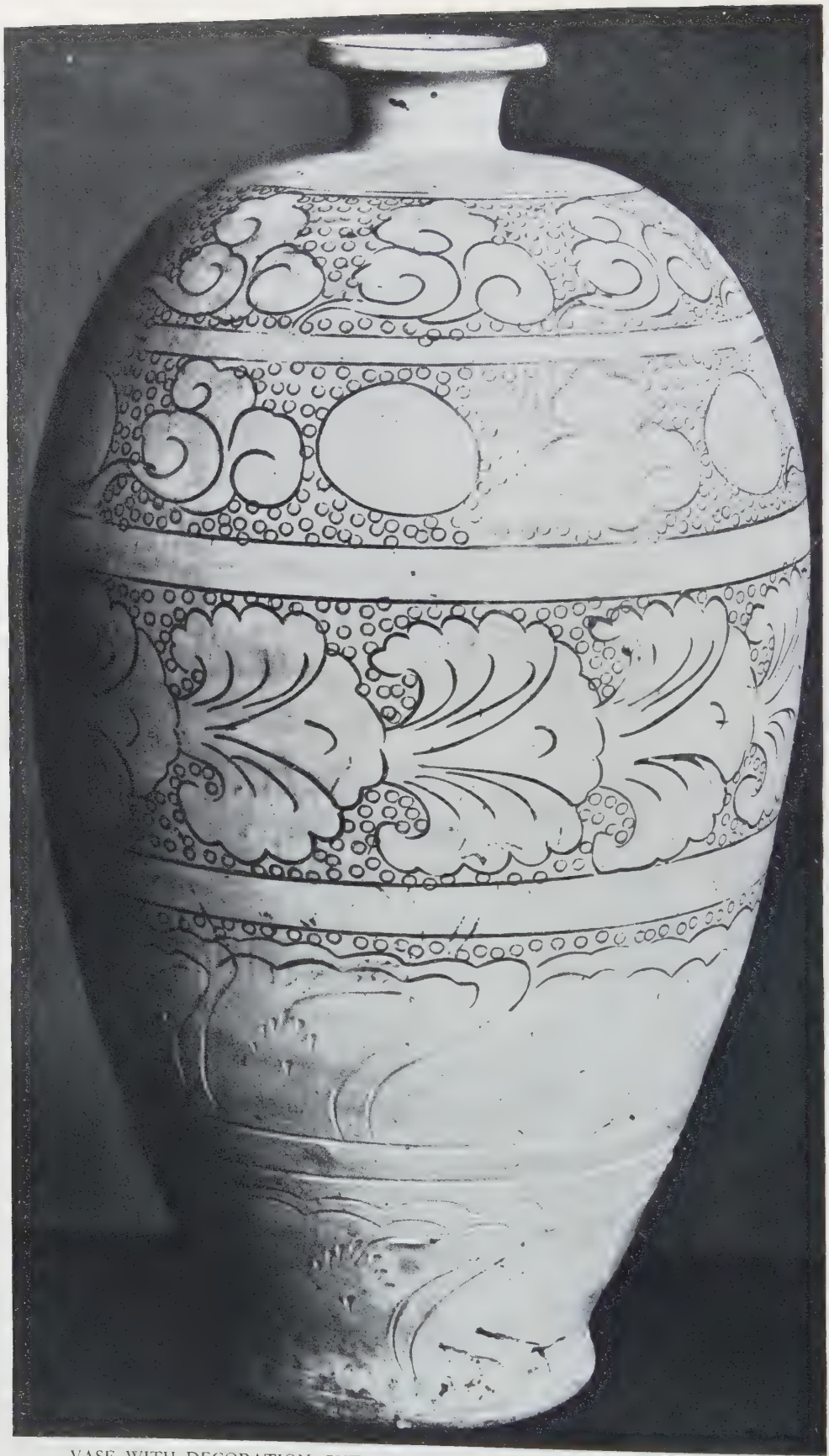
It is by their perfect sense of shape and line that the Sung potters make their first claim on our attention and wonder. Extreme delicacy of poise and unfailing sureness of hand are the striking quality of some classes of their work. Perhaps in the exquisite cream-white wares of Ting-chou and its imitators this is most apparent, as in the pierced lid of an incense-burner—a marvel of cutting in soft clay—shown in PLATE 32,B. The bowl of Ko porcelain, which was among the first arrivals of Sung ware in Europe [PLATE 45, A]—it found a resting-place at South Kensington in 1883—is a simple thing, but the modern potter is a happy man who can rival the perfection of contour shown in that sober grey-white vessel with its confining line of soft dark brown at the rim. In some of the wares again the potters have worked with greater freedom, but never with loss of dignity.

Side by side with the more refined types of Sung ware represented by the delicate Fên Ting porcelain or the exquisite bowls of the *ying ch'ing* class, there are many robust types of ware dating from Sung times. Some collectors, for all their admiration of the finer porcelains, will gain no less satisfaction from the wares made for ordinary use, with little or no conscious thought of decoration. PLATE 29,A shows such a piece, which is of no great rarity, being chosen from the large number available of these more or less ordinary wares. It is of a coarse drab porcellanous body, with cream-coloured glaze, stopping some way short of the foot—a type of ware which has been found especially in excavations at Chü-lu-hsien, in Chihli province, a site overwhelmed by a flood in 1108, that is, a short time before the southward flight of the Sung court. This vessel shows qualities which are a delight to the practising potter who understands his craft; it is seen at first glance to be made of clay and thrown on the wheel. No attempt has been made to give it a shape which the material will not quite easily and naturally take. The jar is of pleasing shape, approaching the *albarello* of the Near East and Italy. Its lower part has been cut, as it turned on the wheel, into a series of receding ridges; a few lines have been lightly scored, first horizontally, then verticaly, in the surface, perhaps as a rough decoration, but with the result of giving a better purchase for the hand in holding.

The carved decoration which we see in its simplest form in this jar is a feature of many of the Sung porcelains, such as the Lung-ch'üan celadons and the Ting wares. We have a good example in a celadon vase [PLATE 30,B] and a Ting bowl [PLATE 32,C], carved on the outside in rough

A—JAR, STONEWARE, WITH DECORATION CUT THROUGH A TREACLE-BROWN GLAZE. Tz'ŭ-chou, Sung Dynasty.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

B—JAR, PORCELAIN, PAINTED ON THE BISCUIT WITHIN RAISED OUTLINES IN COLOURED GLAZES (TURQUOISE-BLUE, BUFF AND WHITE ON A DARK BLUE GROUND). Ming Dynasty.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)



VASE WITH DECORATION CUT THROUGH A THICK CREAM-WHITE SLIP, EXPOSING THE WARM BUFF BODY AS A GROUND FOR THE DESIGN.
Tz'ŭ-chou ware. Sung Dynasty.

(Mr. Ferdinand N. Schiller.)

STATUETTE OF A JUDGE OF HELL.
Glazed stoneware. Height, 4 ft. 6 in. Middle Ming period.
(*British Museum.*)

VASE, PORCELAIN, PAINTED ON THE BISCUIT.
Fifteenth century.

VASE, PORCELAIN, PAINTED ON THE BISCUIT. Chêng Tê period (1506—1521).
(*Lady Lever Art Gallery.*)

VASE, *FAMILLE NOIRE*. K'ang Hsi period (1662—1722).

(*Lady Lever Art Gallery.*)

VASE, PORCELAIN, *FAMILLE VERTE*. K'ang Hsi period (1662—1722).
(*Lady Lever Art Gallery.*)

BOWL, PORCELAIN, PAINTED IN ENAMEL COLOURS OF THE *FAMILLE VERTE*.
Period of K'ang Hsi (1662—1722).

(*Leonard Gow Collection.*)

BOWL, PORCELAIN, ENAMELLED ON THE BISCUIT.
K'ang Hsi period (1662—1722).

(Lady Lever Art Gallery.)

BOTTLE, PORCELAIN, WITH *FAMILLE VERTE* DECORATION ON A POWDER BLUE GROUND. K'ang Hsi period (1662—1722).

(*Lady Lever Art Gallery.*)

simulation of a lotus flower. Carving and engraving in a variety of forms is the method followed in decorating a large part of the wares made at Tz'u-chou, which are foremost among the heavier group of Sung dynasty pottery. In one Tz'u-chou class the technique is precisely that of the *sgraffiato* wares of the Near East and Europe. A design is executed by cutting through a white slip coating to an underlying body of darker colour, and a glaze either colourless or stained with a colouring oxide is then laid over the whole. More often, however, the Tz'u-chou potters adopted a variation of this technique; an opaque glaze, either white or brown, was first laid on the body and through this the design was scratched—or often deeply cut into the body—before the glaze was fired. When fired in the kiln, the glaze tended to heap itself up in a thick billow along the edges of these incised lines and spaces, as may be seen especially in the large jars and vases with a frieze of ornament reserved on a ground of dark treacle-brown glaze. Of this class, which probably lasted into the time of the Yüan emperors, if not even into the Ming period, the vase shown in PLATE 33,A, is an example of unusually fine quality.

In the band of incised fishes and lotus-flowers with which this vase is decorated, the potter has carried his work precisely as far as was needful for explanation, and no further. His procedure is of the simplest—a series of continuous scalloped lines renders the scales of the fishes, the curved outlines of their bodies and of the petals of the flowers are well set off by a background of hatched strokes, which are saved from monotony by arrangement in groups of varying direction. In this unhesitating sureness with which a decorative effect is obtained, the mastery of the early Chinese potter is apparent. It shows itself no less in extreme simplicity of shape, as in the perfect grace of the vase in PLATE 34, an example of the Tz'u-chou *sgraffiato* technique. Rarely did a Sung or Yüan potter allow himself to be tempted beyond the forms which could be attained without strain by methods legitimate to the craft. Their straightforward shapes are a rebuke to modern potters, who too often doom themselves to failure in their anxious search for originality in this respect.

If the Sung potters have left us little to prove their love of colour, this means not that they were deficient in it, but rather that they lacked as yet the means to give it expression. The Chün ware [PLATE 28] with its hues of fiery crimson and purple and blue, the strong rich browns of Tz'u-chou and Chien, the delicate cream and ivory tones of the Ting wares and the quiet greens of the Lung-ch'üan celadons [PLATE 30,B] betoken a very real appreciation of colour. These Sung wares often have, moreover, a quality of glaze all their own which we miss in the later porcelains—a silky or unctuous surface which commends them to the touch no less than to the eye. Despite their undeniable beauty, however, it may be that these colour-glaze Sung wares—especially the Chün—are rated too highly by collectors. They owe their qualities, in some measure, to the chances of the kiln, and not to human agency, and their beauties are displayed on shapes which, though irreproachable, are too often somewhat tedious and lacking in vitality. They escape the excellences as well as the failures that are possible where the potter has taken the glorious risk

of adding decorative design, by painting or engraving, to help or mar his shape.

Colour is, however, the master quality which distinguishes Chinese porcelain from all other pottery in the world, and its full glory was only reached under the rule of the Ming emperors. The development, in the early years of the dynasty, of glaze pigments fusible at a moderate temperature and applied directly on the body—*sur biscuit*—allowed a wealth of harmonious colour unknown before. There can be no doubt that the effect of this splendour of colour in the Ming porcelains is enhanced by their substantial and well-balanced shapes, visibly the products of a prosperous and ordered realm. The vase in the Salting Collection at South Kensington, reproduced in PLATE 33,B, is as good an example as could be found to illustrate this point. Its decoration, drawn in slip in raised outline and painted on the biscuit in soft but rich glaze pigments against a deep blackish-blue ground, is perfect in draughtsmanship and in calculated balance of colour, filling without crowding the surface. Its shape shows the same good sense for pottery form that we have claimed as characteristic of the earlier Chinese wares. An example of the same technique is the fine gourd-shaped vase with figures of sages shown on PLATE 36, whilst in that on PLATE 37 the outlines for the pigments, instead of being raised, are lightly engraved in the paste before firing. The same solid proportions which we notice in pieces such as these are characteristic of the Ming figures, whether of porcelain or in coarser material. Not all the many examples that have come into Western possession are of equal merit, but the statuette of a Judge of Hell in the British Museum [PLATE 35] is worthy of comparison with its great T'ang predecessors.

It was with the more extensive importation of cobalt from Western Asia in early Ming times that painting, or rather drawing in colour with the brush as distinct from the laying on of coloured washes, came to hold in China, as elsewhere, a foremost place in the decoration of pottery. Herein lay seeds of disaster, destined to spring up in crops of hideousness in the Chinese porcelain, and still more in the European wares, of modern times; but in disciplined and sober hands this method has won for pottery some of its most glorious triumphs. Turn a deaf ear to academic pleas as to the wickedness of painting pictures on a pot, and you will come to agree that such a work as the blue-and-white bowl in PLATE 45,B is its own justification. The tender blue pigment is lovely in itself. The drawing of plants, birds and other creatures is as perfect as any engraved design; of Sung rendered, as it is, before glazing on the absorbent biscuit—once drawn, drawn beyond recall—it is no less searching a test of the power and courage of the artist. The shape of the bowl, too, is clear testimony to the fine feeling of the early Ming potters—for there is good reason to accept as authentic the mark of Hsüan Tê, with which it is inscribed. The vase of the Wan Li period, reproduced in PLATE 46,A, shows the tendency to ungainliness of form into which dignity was apt to fall away in later Ming times, but its painting of figure subjects and peach-trees is full of vitality and enjoyment.

Underglaze brushwork must always hold the place of honour in

RUBY-BACK PLATE, EGG-SHELL PORCELAIN. Yung Chêng period (1723—1735).
(*Lady Lever Art Gallery.*)

VASE WITH *SANG-DE-BOEUF* GLAZE. Ch'ien Lung period (1736—1795).
(*Lady Lever Art Gallery.*)

pottery painting techniques; the work of the enamel-painter can never rival it, if only because it makes so much less demand on the calibre of the artist. It can, however, produce effects of colour which are equal to the finest obtainable in any form of art whatsoever, and when combined with sensitive drawing, as on the jar of middle Ming times shown in PLATE 32,A, it must be allqwed a high place in order of merit. A quite extraordinary chromatic force is attained in some of the later Ming porcelains, especially those of the reign of Chia Ching, in which two or three colours only have been used—purple with green or yellow, yellow or green with iron-red, blue and yellow—and the finer pieces of the five-colour type of Chia Ching and Wan Li show a rich harmony of colour combined with a delicacy of drawing which could not easily be surpassed.

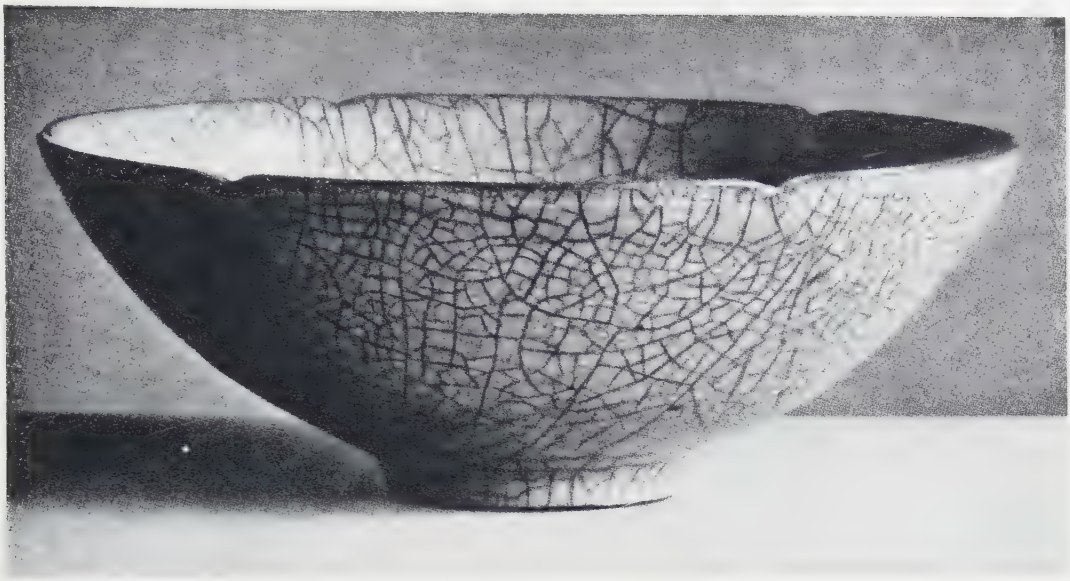
The breadth and dignity which characterize all the best Ming design passed away with the close of the dynasty. Only rarely, as in some of the K'ang Hsi blue-and-white landscape vases and in the best of the *famille verte* and *famille noire* floral designs, do we find anything like the same quality. As a rule, the porcelains of K'ang Hsi and his successors give an impression of great dexterity and *bravura* without any deep underlying feeling. Mere elegance and charm of colour become ever more and more their chief recommendation. But a very real charm there is about such pieces as the figures and vessels with " three-colour " painting " on the biscuit " [PLATES 41, 47], or the square vase in the Leverhulme Collection [PLATE 38], with " Flowers of the Four Seasons " in shades of green, yellow and mauve, contrasting with a ground of intense lustrous black. In the powder-blue bottle [PLATE 42] and the baluster vase [PLATE 39] the overglaze enamels of the *famille verte* are seen at their best in the exquisite drawings of flowers and ladies in gardens; another admirable example of the same class is the bowl in PLATE 40. The K'ang Hsi blue-and-white of which PLATE 46,B shows an example has qualities of its own rivalling those of the Ming blue. The same skill in the choice and handling of colours is shown even in the best examples of the more luscious *famille rose*, as in the large dish with the favourite " longevity " motives of peaches and bats and the mark of Yung Chêng shown in PLATE 48,B. The elements of the design are admirably distributed over the surface, and although the flowers and fruits are rendered so faithfully that their species could be named with precision by a botanist, their arrangement has been rigidly controlled. There is a great gulf between such measure of realism as we have here and the soulless naturalistic flower paintings that were thought suitable decoration for European porcelain in the nineteenth century. Even where this high level of decorative design is not maintained there are often compensations in delicacy of draughtsmanship and extreme daintiness of colour, as in the famous ruby-back eggshell plates and other less assuming members of the family [PLATES 48,A, 43]. We must remember too that concurrently with these wonderful exhibitions of virtuosity in overglaze enamel painting, the imperial kilns at Ching-tê Chên were passing through what may be called the Chinese " classical revival " movement. Efforts, often nearly successful, were being made to reproduce the masterpieces in porcelain of the earlier dynasties. Great

care was being bestowed on the imitation not only of the painted designs but also of the various coloured glazes of the past, and the results, in the latter category especially, have often undeniable beauties of their own. New glazes were being invented such as the *sang-de-boeuf* and apple-green [PLATES 44, 49], which surpass in rich splendour of colour anything produced under the earlier dynasties. It is in the matter of shape that these wares generally fall short. We miss in them the simplicity and the vital beauty of contour seldom wanting in the early prototypes.

It may be of interest to give, in closing, a short survey of the history of the collecting of Chinese porcelain in Europe. The earliest pieces to arrive in the West were a few strays, such as the Warham cup at Oxford and a silver-mounted bowl at Cassel, which found their way to Europe as princely gifts or among the articles brought home as things of wondrous rarity by travellers in the East. They were generally of the class of celadons or blue-and-white, made for export to the Mohammedan countries of Southern and Western Asia. It was with the growth of the Dutch Eastern trade in the seventeenth century that collecting, as we understand it, may be said to have begun. The taste of the Dutch merchants seems to have been almost entirely in the direction of painted porcelain, and particularly of blue-and white, which their own potters at Delft soon began to imitate, abandoning the bright and gay maiolica colouring which had formerly been in vogue amongst them.

The Chinese were not slow to note certain tendencies in the Dutch choice of decoration and to develop, in response to the demands of their clients, those peculiar types of design which we class as *chinoiseries*. At the same time, however, there were princely collectors in Europe, such as Augustus the Strong of Saxony and, in lesser degree, our own Queen Mary, who could appreciate the finest work of the painters of Ching-tê Chên. About the middle of the eighteenth century, doubtless as a result partly of the successes of the new art created by Kändler at Meissen, the taste for Chinese porcelain seems to have abated, except only in France. It is, perhaps, typical of that country that the beauty of celadon, turquoise, crackled white and other single-colour glazes, appealed strongly to the taste of French amateurs of art. From the time of Louis XIV until the Revolution, the foremost *ciseleurs* devoted their best skill to the mounting in chased ormolu of these beautiful wares. Elsewhere, through the period of the classical revival, things Chinese were regarded as unworthy of serious attention, and an interest in them as betokening a frivolous taste for what was deemed outlandish and grotesque.

It was after the middle of the nineteenth century that a return to saner judgments came about. French collectors were seeking eagerly for the enamel-painted porcelains of the previous century, when the "Histoire de la Porcelaine" of Jacquemart and le Blant made its appearance, with its verbose criticisms and elaborate classification, originating the famous appellations *famille verte* and *famille rose*. In England admirers were found especially for blue-and-white. Among the leaders of the cult were Whistler, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and James Orrock, who, as artists, saw the value as decoration of the sapphire tones of "old Nanking."



A—BOWL, CRACKLED, GREYISH-WHITE PORCELAIN WITH DARK BROWN EDGE.
Ko ware. Sung Dynasty.

(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

B—BOWL, PORCELAIN, PAINTED IN BLUE.
Mark and perhaps period of Hsüan Tê (1426–1435).

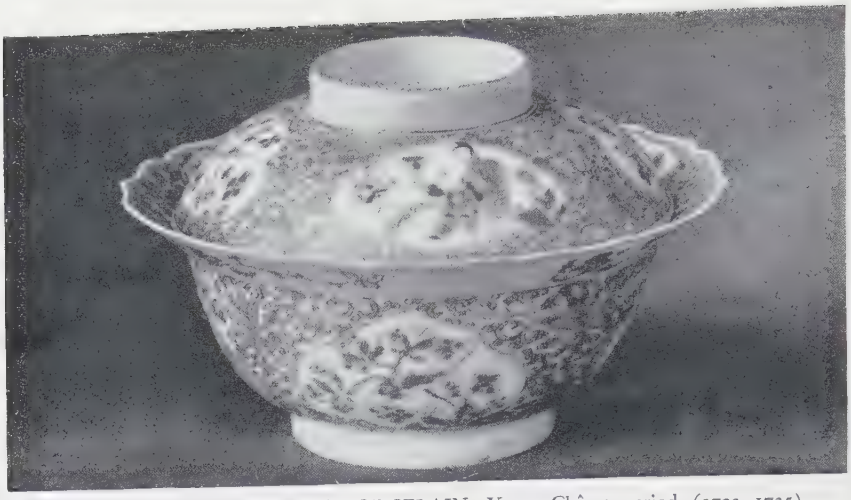
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

A—HEXAGONAL BLUE AND WHITE BEAKER, Wan Li period (1573–1619).

B—BLUE AND WHITE VASE. K'ang Hsi period

FIGURE, PORCELAIN, KUAN YIN ON THE HEAD OF A DRAGON EMERGING FROM THE WAVES. Seventeenth century.

(Lady Lever Art Gallery.)



A—BOWL, *FAMILLE ROSE*, PORCELAIN. Yung Chêng period (1723–1735).
(Lady Lever Art Gallery.)

B—DISH, PORCELAIN, PAINTED IN ENAMEL COLOURS OF THE *FAMILLE ROSE*.
Mark and period by Yung Chêng (1723–1735). *(Victoria and Albert Museum.)*

MONGOLIA
MANCHURIA
CHIHLI
SHANSI
SHANTUNG
KANSU
HONAN
KIANGSU
SZECHWAN
HUPEH
NGANHWEI
HUNAN
KIANGSI
CHEKIANG
KWEICHOW
FUKIEN
KWANGSI
KWANGTUNG
YUNNAN
FORMOSA
HAINAN
Yellow River
Yangtze River
Lake Tung Ting
LIU LI CHÜ
PEKING
Wu chung hsien
TING CHOU
Ch'ü yang hsien
PING TING CHOU
Yü tzü hsien
Hsing chou
TZÜ CHOU
Yen shên chên
PO SHAN HSIEN
HO CHOU
Ping yang Fu
Tsou hsien
Yi hsien
PAI SHUI
LEI HSIANG
YO CHOU
Ting Chou
Kuan Chung
Yen Shan
Hua ting hsien
Huai ching Fu
Shan chou
Yi yang hsien
CH'EN LIU
CHÜN CHOU
HSU CHOU
HSIAO HSIEN
SU CHOU
SZE CHOU
TÊNG CHOU
Junning Fu
Shoucha
Hwai River
Yi chen
Kua chou
NANKING
Yi hsing hsien
SHANGHAI
Soo chou
Chang chou chên
Ka shan
YU HANG HSIEN
HSUAN CHOU
HANG CHOU
Yueh chou
YU YAO
HSIANG SHAN
Chi mên hsien
Fu Yang
Wu yuan hsien
Wu chou
HU TIEN
CH'ANG CHOU CHÜN
Hung chou
Ma kêng
Chu chou
Wên chou Fu
LUNG CHUAN
LI SHUI HSIEN
CHIN TS'UN
LIN CH'UAN
Shao wu Fu
Ssü tu
CHIEN YANG
NAN FÊNG HSIEN
Lan ch'i
CHI CHOU
Tai ning
TÊ HUA
Tzü tsao
An ch'i
Tung an hsien
Amoy
Pakhoi
Ch'ao chou Fu
Kuangchow (Canton)
Chao ching
Fat shan
Sh'un wan
Yang chiang hsien
Chinchow
Tamchow
Lienchou
Tayi
Chêng tu
Lungshan
Hochou
Sketch Map of CHINA, showing Pottery & Porcelain Factories
Tang dynasty factories:- + Ta yi.
boundaries:-
Sung & Yüan dynasties factories:- ● YO CHOU
boundaries
Ming & Ch'ing dynasties factories:- △ Chêng tu
boundaries:-
Note: Factories are marked in the dynasty in which they originated
Scale 0 50 100 150 200 250 Miles
114° East of Greenwich

Where aesthetic judgment led the way, fashion followed, blind and undiscriminating; the patterns with their pretty but formal and often tedious repetitions, which were devised to please the Dutch of an earlier day, were belauded as if they had been serious works of art of a high order.

The phase which followed, typified by the names of Salting in England, Grandidier in France, and Walters in America, saw the ascendancy of the enamel painting of the eighteenth century, with its brilliant blends of colour and highly accomplished, if superficial, techniques. At the same time there was no lack of admiration for the single-colour glazes, especially the *sang-de-boeuf* and the turquoise-blue, both deriving their distinctive colouring from copper in different forms.

The discoveries which astonished the world of connoisseurs in the beginning of the twentieth century brought about a revolution in the aims and ideas of collectors. In the wave of enthusiasm which greeted the masterpieces, now newly revealed, of the classic ages of Chinese art, there was a danger that the real merits of later works would be forgotten or overlooked; but a truly catholic taste will find something of good in the best art of most periods, and room will be found by the collector for chosen pieces of Ch'ing craftsmanship in company with the great achievements of T'ang, Sung and Ming.

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BOTTLE WITH "APPLE GREEN" CRACKLE GLAZE. Ch'ien Lung Period (1736—1795).
(*Lady Lever Art Gallery.*)

THE DRAGON-BOAT FESTIVAL. Tapestry panel; eighteenth century. Size, 2 ft. 10 in. by 3 ft. 10 in.

(*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

TEXTILES

By A. F. Kendrick

TO the Western mind, from its early contact with the Far East down to times within living memory, China has been the home of strange and eccentric ideas and ways. Its works of art have had an air of singularity, which has probably done more than anything else to give rise to an ever-increasing popular vogue for things Chinese, or at least *façon de la Chine*. The ancients had heard of the Chinese, but they had a very hazy idea as to where they lived, and some even thought that they dwelt at the sources of the Nile. They were known by more names than one. That of the Seres was the most widely used, and it deserves notice because it has to do with the present subject. From Seres was formed the term *Serica*, Seric garments, and thence came the word "silk" in its various forms into European languages. In this string of associated words there lies a hint that the ancients connected the Chinese more with the fine textile material they produced than with anything else. In the eyes of the world they were the silk-providing people, and the need for securing this traffic gave rise to many formidable military expeditions.

The earliest silk stuffs brought to the West have all perished, and we should be very much in the dark as to what they were like, were it not for the explorations of Aurel Stein, Pelliot, Von le Coq, Kozloff and others in the buried sites of Central Asia. Even Egypt, which has provided more material for the history of early textile art than all the rest of the world, has yielded no Chinese weavings attributable to an earlier period than the thirteenth century.

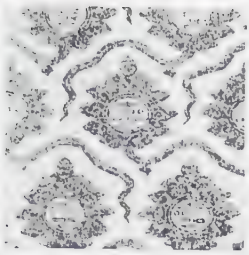
The earliest Chinese silk weavings we know were found by Sir Aurel Stein during his third Central-Asian expedition in the year 1914. They were unearthed in a cemetery site, now part of the Lop desert, in Chinese Turkestan. They were found on the route opened out for the silk trade with the West by the Chinese late in the second century B.C., and finally closed early in the fourth century A.D., after losing much of its traffic by the discovery of an easier route two centuries earlier. These silk fabrics have been described in the *Burlington Magazine* (Vol. XXXVII) by the discoverer and his assistant, Mr. F. H. Andrews, who illustrated them by drawings (fig., p. 46). From considerations suggested by the site and circumstances of their discovery Sir Aurel is inclined to place them in the first century B.C. In any case the argument that they cannot be later than the fourth century A. D. appears conclusive. The tenacity with which the Chinese have held to their traditional motives of design is nowhere more plainly demonstrated than in these silks. The dragons, animals and birds, horsemen, cloud-scrolls, floral stems and diapers have their counterparts in Chinese art of the twentieth century, although modifications in

form, due to the lapse of two thousand years, were inevitable. The dislike of the Chinese for innovations is not the sole cause. The motives, and even the colours, they used were closely linked with their philosophic and religious beliefs, and the craftsman was not at liberty to select them at random. Ornaments were tabulated into series with their appropriate uses, and colours used on one occasion were not admissible on another. Some were reserved for the imperial family alone; others were the prerogative of the higher nobility, and so on through a score or more of stages. These facts go a long way towards explaining the contrast of symbolism and naturalism which characterizes the repertory of the Chinese weaver and embroiderer. In the delineation of nature he is inimitable, and yet in matters of mythology and symbolism he does not care to leave the road of tradition. What he sees with the inward and the outward eye is harmonized in a way hard for us to understand.

The four centuries following the end of the Han dynasty have little or nothing to show in the way of textile art. When we come to the period of the T'ang dynasty (618—906 A.D.) the textile material is more abundant. By this time the Chinese fleets were not infrequently seen in the Persian Gulf, and the effects of trafficking with Western Asia begin to show themselves. The Arab chronicler, Mas'ûdî, writing towards the end of this period, speaks of the unsurpassed skill of the Chinese artist. The justice of this criticism is evidence that the writer had some familiarity with Chinese work at the time. The bond of sympathy between the Chinese and the other people of the Asiatic continent was then greater than at any later period. The affinity is obvious in many of the stuffs of T'ang times. Motives of decoration are sometimes shared with Persia and its neighbours, and it is not always the West which is the borrower. The intercourse between India and China was emphasized by the Chinese acceptance of Buddhism. Testimony to this association is borne by an embroidered silk hanging of the T'ang period in the British Museum, representing a standing figure of Buddha attended by disciples and Bodhisattvas. This unique work of art was found by Sir Aurel Stein in the year 1908 in the Cave-temples of the Thousand Buddhas at Tun-huang, Kansu province. A conspicuous illustration of Chinese relations with Persia is the woven silk banner formerly in the Horiu-ji monastery at Nara, the old capital of Japan, and now in the Tokyo Museum. The pattern is disposed in large circles, each containing four men on winged horses aiming arrows at lions. It is a typical Sassanian hunting-scene, with the king as the hero, but the craftsman has recast it in a mould of his own. The banner is said to have been used by Prince Shotoku (572—623 A.D.) at the conquest of Shiragi in Korea, and deposited in the monastery by the Emperor Keka (884—887 A.D.). The delineation of the subject is Chinese in feeling, and Chinese characters (for "Happiness" and "Mountain") are marked on the flanks of the horses in place of the royal brand of the Sassanian kings. The first of these characters is also to be seen on a silk fragment found by M. Pelliot in the deserts of Central Asia, and now in the Musée de l'Extrême Orient in the Louvre. It has a representation of a cock standing on one leg, enclosed by a circle of

A.

B.



C.

D.

E.

A, B, C, D—SILK WEAVINGS OF THE YUAN OR EARLY MING DYNASTY, FOUND IN EGYPT.
E—SILK DAMASK, MING DYNASTY. Length, as shown, 15 in.
(All in the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA. Embroidery of the eighteenth century. Size, 5 ft. 9 in. by 4 ft. 5 in.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

vine foliage, a design obviously influenced by Sassanian woven silks. The same motive, rendered somewhat differently, is to be found on a silk weaving in the great treasure-house at Nara (the Shôsô-in), forming part of the collection dedicated by the widow of the Japanese Emperor Shômu, shortly after her husband's death in 748 A.D. Much of this treasure is actually of Chinese worksmanship.

The gradual advance of the Arabs eastwards no doubt did more than anything else towards checking the assimilative tendencies in the art of Eastern and Western Asia. The artists of the succeeding Sung period were more conservative in their outlook.

Under the Yüan dynasty, founded by the Mongolian Kublai Khan about 1280, relations with the West were revived. Chinese junks appeared in the ports of India and the Red Sea. Kublai's sway extended right across the breadth of Asia into Europe, and the dread inspired by his government established a respect for law which gave confidence to travellers. The Venetian, Marco Polo, and many others less renowned, faced the hardships of the journey, and astonished their countrymen by their stories of the skill, the industry and the greatness of the Chinese people. It is largely to this time that the transport of numbers of early Chinese silks still to be seen in medieval church treasures of Europe may be ascribed. One example from the Cathedral of Halberstadt has a pattern of palmettes enclosed by floral stems in flat gold strips on a red satin ground. This brocade is probably of the period of the Yüan dynasty. The well-known black and gold brocade in St. Mary's Church at Danzig is certainly of that time. The pattern of large polygons (intended for circles) enclosing parrots, with dragons in the intervening spaces, is partly derived from Western sources, but there can be no doubt about the nationality of the craftsman. It has an Arabic inscription in honour of En Nâsir; the most celebrated ruler bearing this name was Muhammad ibn Qalâ'un, Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, who reigned from 1293 to 1341 A.D., and the brocade was probably woven as a present for him.

The green silk damask illustrated [PLATE 51,D] also records the name of this Sultan. It was found in a burying-ground at El A'zâm, near Asyût, in Upper Egypt. Chinese influence in the design is evident, but it is doubtful whether the weaver was of that nationality. Two other silk stuffs from the same site are shown in the accompanying illustrations. The first [PLATE 51,A] is in pale blue on a buff ground. The palmettes each bear a form of the Chinese longevity *(shou)* character. The Chinese script is not simple enough to invite imitations by foreigners ignorant of the language, and where the characters are rendered in intelligible form there need be little doubt (as a rule) about the nationality of the craftsman. The pattern in this instance entirely confirms that view. A comparison with the damask just described points to the conclusion that the two stuffs are contemporary, or nearly so. This silk weaving may therefore be ascribed to the period of the Yüan dynasty. The second fabric [PLATE 51,C] is in the same colours as the first. It has no inscription, but the *ch'i-lin*, an animal belonging only to Chinese mythology, is shown in the repeating circles. There are traces of the influence of Muhammadan

arabesque in this stuff. There were millions of Chinese adherents to that faith at the time, and this silk may have been woven by or for Chinese Muhammadans, but there is some probability that it is an example of the catering for the foreign market which has been a conspicuous feature of Chinese craftsmanship for many centuries. All three stuffs had been made into garments worn during lifetime in Egypt.

In dealing with these medieval fabrics, it is not always easy to draw the line between the Chinese stuffs made for home use or for export, and those made elsewhere under Chinese influence. The silk damask illustrated on PLATE 51,B is in pale blue and buff, with a form of the *shou* character in the heart of each flower. This feature confirms the evidence of the texture and design as to the nationality of the stuff. Other stuffs showing similar motives have Western features as well, and there is much to be said in favour of the view that they are really Chinese wares made for export.

The advent of the native Ming rulers in the year 1368 brought about a change in foreign relations. Outside intercourse waned, and the Chinese were content to leave the rest of the world alone.

The Portuguese, the first Europeans to reach China by sea, arrived at Canton in 1517. Traffic, which had dropped considerably under the earlier Ming emperors, now revived in the hands of Europeans. During the short interval of hardly more than a century Europe had had time to forget China and the Chinese almost entirely. In the first half of the sixteenth century Ramusio writes that the story of his countryman Marco Polo had come to be regarded as fabulous; "howbeit, during the last hundred years, persons acquainted with Persia have begun to recognize the existence of Cathay."

Had we no other means of tracing the history of European intercourse with the Far East from this time onwards, the textiles alone would provide many a useful clue.

The opening-out of the sea route to the East brought Chinese works of art to Europe in quantities never known before. Other nations followed the Portuguese, and a craze for *chinoiserie* swept over the seafaring countries of Europe.

In the first instance works of art such as the Chinese used themselves were brought over. In course of time this traffic created a demand which was met by the setting-up of special factories for export wares in the neighbourhood of the trading ports. Then came the efforts of Western craftsmen to meet the prevailing demand by making goods in the Chinese taste. Chinese works of art are referred to in Cardinal Mazarin's inventory of 1649; four years later there are entries *façon de la Chine, faites à Paris.* Occasionally a stuff obviously Chinese seems to imitate European *chinoiserie.* Perhaps in these cases the craftsman failed to realize that he was copying his own work at second-hand.

A good deal of ecclesiastical embroidery was done in China for the Portuguese. At times such work is most incongruous. Figures of saints of the Christian Church are set among the phoenixes, the spotted deer, the fantastic rocks and the floral motives of China.

In the representation of St. Anthony of Padua with the Infant Saviour

LANDSCAPE WITH PHOENIXES. Tapestry panel. Eighteenth century. Size, 6 ft. 6 in.

A

B

C

D

A—A PILLAR CARPET. Eighteenth century.

B—WOOLLEN CARPET. Eighteenth century.

C & *D*—PIECES OF SILK EMBROIDERY FROM GARMENTS. Eighteenth century.

DRESS EMBROIDERY. Eighteenth century.

SILK EMBROIDERY. Eighteenth century.

(*In the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin.*)

[PLATE 52], the central group and the cherub-heads are based on a European drawing or engraving, but the details are everywhere Chinese, as well as the flowers and foliage. The work is in coloured silks on a white satin ground. It was probably made for a native Christian community.

While the Portuguese sailed eastwards, the Spaniards took the westerly route and reached China by way of the Spanish main and the South American ports. In the Philippines, which they occupied on the way, a distinctive style of Chinese embroidery was done for them. The hanging illustrated in PLATE 58 is a typical example. The type is so obvious that Mr. Van de Put, Librarian of the Victoria and Albert Museum, hazarded the conjecture that the somewhat complicated heraldry might refer to a Spanish governor of Manila. He found the design of the arms to be practically identical with the armorial vignette signed " Nicolaus à Cruce " painted upon the dedication page of Villavicencio's " Demonstración del Cuerpo de Cargos," printed at Manila in 1737. The arms are those of Don Fernando Valdes Tamon, Knight of Santiago, Governor and Captain-General of the Philippine Islands. The work is in coloured silks on a white satin ground. It was probably the altar-frontal of the Governor's chapel. It now belongs to Lady Laura Hampton.

Two embroideries are here reproduced in colours. The first is the corner of a silk robe embroidered with flowers, peaches, bats and butterflies. The other is a hanging, with peonies and magnolias [PLATES 55, 56]. Two smaller floral embroideries are shown on PLATE 54,C,D.

Large numbers of Chinese textiles were brought to England by the ships of the East India Company. Sometimes the directors at home, writing to the factors in the East, described to them the colours and the kind of work most in favour. Occasionally definite commissions for special work were sent out. An embroidery here reproduced [PLATE 57,B] bears the arms of the first Duke of Chandos, " the princely Chandos," one of the foremost patrons of the arts of his time. His arms impale those of his second wife, thereby dating the work between the years 1719 and 1735. The embroidery is in coloured silks on a yellow satin ground, with a framework of European blue velvet.

Painted silks were produced in great quantities in China, generally in lengths made up in Europe into costumes and hangings. Even vestments meant for Christian use were sometimes painted rather than embroidered.

All through these times the Chinese seem to have been able to meet the enormous European demand without regarding foreign styles as anything more than a veneer to be applied merely to articles for export.

The long strip shown in PLATE 57,C is a typical example of Chinese velvet-weaving for the market at home. A single colour is the rule, and red (as in this case) is the favourite. The contrast is obtained by cutting parts to form a pile, which stands out in a darker tone than the rest in which the loops of thread are left uncut. The difference in tone obtained by this simple device is amazing. The panel depends entirely on this method for the salience of the pattern from the ground. These long strips are quite common in Chinese textiles, whether brocades,embroideries

tapestries or velvets. They are used as chair-covers in China. The panel for the seat is generally emphasized; here it is marked out by a lobed framework surrounding the lotus flower. The part below hangs down in front. The device immediately above is for the back, and that at the top hangs over behind and is reversed for that reason. The way in which these panels were used is shown in an engraving representing a dinner party in a mandarin's house in T. Allom and G. N. Wright's "China Illustrated," published in 1843 (Vol. I, p. 93).

The Chinese appear to have learned the art of velvet-weaving from the West; their velvets are often very decorative, but in texture they will not bear comparison with the best work of Italy. The case is different when we come to tapestry-weaving. The process is the same in principle as that followed in the West. The Chinese weaver carries it to the last degree of technical accomplishment. The warp threads are of very fine silk, and the weft of silk often enhanced by the lavish use of gold thread. These tapestries known by the name of *k'o-ssu*, are perhaps the best known and the most highly appreciated of all Chinese textiles. The use of such fine threads in the warp, while exacting the utmost skill and patience from the weaver, gives to the finished web the greatest attainable brilliance of effect. This type of work has an ancestry reaching back as far as the T'ang dynasty, and probably much earlier. Examples of the T'ang period found by Sir Aurel Stein and Dr. von le Coq in Central Asia are remarkably like the work of modern times. A piece found in the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas has a pattern of flowers and key-ornament [*Serindia*, PLATE 106]. One specimen from Kara-khoja represents a tiger, and another stems and foliations [*Chotscho*, PLATE 49].

By far the larger number of the weavings of this class are hangings and robes made in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. No doubt the tradition was continuous, but their fragile nature must be held to account for the disappearance of most of the earlier specimens.

A series of pictures, of which that shown in PLATE 50 is one, is remarkable among tapestry-weavings. Although details are heightened here and there with the brush (in accordance with custom), in the main these elaborate pieces are the work of the loom. The four panels composing the series were intended to be hung on the walls of the reception-room. The subject is the Dragon Procession, one of the chief festivals of the Chinese people, held every year on the fifth day of the fifth month in memory of the minister Ch'ü Yüan, a statesman and poet of the kingdom, who drowned himself in the Mi-lo River in the year 295 B.C. The ritual ceremony at the Dragon-Boat festival involves a search for the minister's body and ends with a propitiation of his spirit by casting into the river tubes containing rice. The procession is shown in an engraving in Allom's book mentioned above (Vol. IV, p. 21).

Another example here reproduced in colours [PLATE 53] is a remarkably decorative *k'o-ssu* hanging partly in gold. Of the two phoenixes, one flies in the clouds over the rocky landscape relieved by the polyporus fungus, peonies, lotuses, and other flowers.

The panel shown in PLATE 59 represents a landscape with grotesque

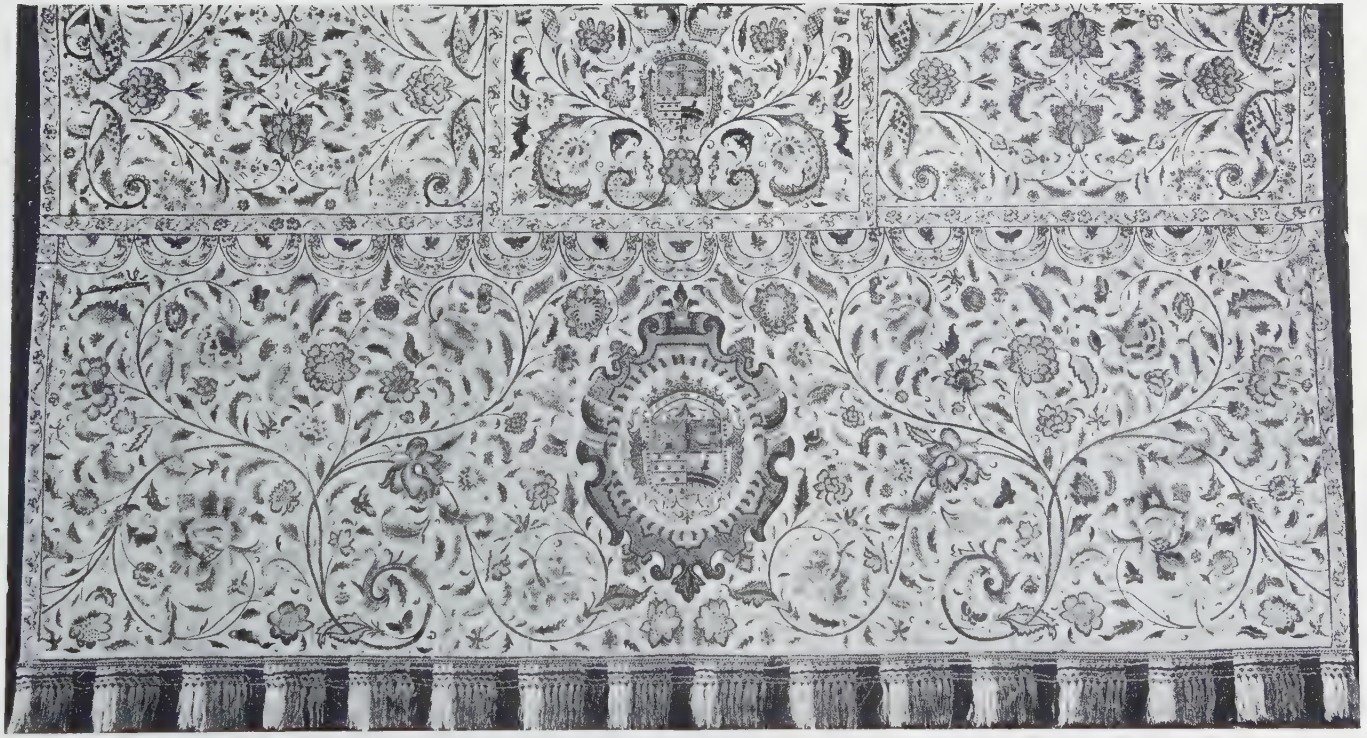
BACK OF AN IMPERIAL ROBE. Ch'ien Lung period.
Size, 3 ft. 1 in. by 3 ft. 8 in.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

B

EMBROIDERY. Arms of the Duke of Chandos.
Early eighteenth century.

C

A VELVET CHAIR COVER.
Eighteenth century.
Size, 5 ft. 6 in. by 1 ft. 8 in.
(Both in Victoria and Albert Museum.)



ALTAR FRONTAL, EMBROIDERED WITH THE ARMS OF DON FERNANDO VALDES TAMON.
Chinese (Manila) early eighteenth century. Size, 3 ft. 5 in. by 6 ft. 9 in.

(Lady Laura Hampton.)

THE MAGNOLIA, PEACH AND TREE PEONY. Tapestry panel. Eighteenth century. Size, 2 ft. $0\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 2 ft. $11\frac{1}{4}$ in.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

WOOLLEN PILE CARPET. Eighteenth century.

(Private Collection.)

rockery and blossoming trees—the magnolia, peach, and tree-peony. The ground is filled with daisies, sprigs of bamboo, and a branched stem of the sacred fungus, against a dark blue background.

When this tapestry-work is used for garments the panels are specially woven for the purpose. The back of a robe in the Victoria and Albert Museum is illustrated in PLATE 57,A. It was made at one of the imperial factories, perhaps at Suchou or Hangchou. The wearer was the emperor or a prince of the blood. Three five-clawed dragons rise from the waves of the sea, encircled by clouds. Some of the "Twelve Ornaments," which legend dates back more than 4,000 years ago, appear here. The full set is figured in Professor Yett's "Symbolism in Chinese Art." Three stars are to be seen just above the upper dragon's head, and the hatchet and "symbol of distinction" are on either side of its body. In the lower corners are the aquatic grass and sacrificial cups. The upper dragon is coiled round a medallion with the *shou* character in the centre surrounded by various emblems of long life and felicity. The pair of dragons below grasp the flaming jewel. The cloud-spaces are filled in with forms of the *shou* character, flying bats, and floral sprays. The material is silk and gold thread on a yellow silk ground. This garment may be attributed to the period of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung (1736—1795).

The next illustrations show examples of Chinese carpet-knotting. The most highly-prized Chinese carpets, woven in silk and gold, are sometimes attributed to medieval times, but few hitherto brought to light can safely be ascribed to an earlier date than the seventeenth century. Fragments of pile-carpets found in Chinese provinces of Central Asia by the various archaeological expeditions during recent years were brought to light in circumstances which point to an almost incredibly early origin. Until the problem raised by them is cleared up, the history of Chinese carpet-weaving cannot be satisfactorily traced.

The Chinese carpet weaver likes, when he can, to overcome the angularity of a design by cutting slantwise into the pile with a pair of shears. This practice weakens the texture considerably, while the resulting improvement of the design is a matter of opinion. The effect of the practice of clipping round the design is seen plainly in PLATE 60, representing a woollen pile carpet woven almost entirely in shades of blue and white. The design when so treated has an appearance of hardness which suggests an inlaid felt rather than a pile surface. The use of the carpet-knotting process is extended in China to other stuffs besides floor coverings. A small mat [PLATE 54,B] has a fret-pattern.

The carpet illustrated on PLATE 54,A, was used in a way peculiar to the Chinese peoples. It was intended to be wrapped round a pillar in a Tibetan temple; when so placed the two long sides come together and the pattern is continuous. It represents a Lama surrounded by clouds and emblematical objects. Below are sea-waves breaking in spray over the rocks, and above is a frieze of festoons of jewels.

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WOVEN SILK FABRIC. Han Period.

Found by Sir Aurel Stein in graves of the Lou-Lan Tract, Central Asia.

Drawn by F. H. ANDREWS.

This shows one section of the wide repeat cut in two, the left-hand edge of the upper portion joining to the right-hand of the lower.

BRONZES AND THE MINOR ARTS:

JADES, LACQUER, ENAMELS, ETC.

By W. W. Winkworth

THE enormous amount of important archaeological work which is now being done on all Chinese subjects, both in the Far East and in our own country, must give us cause to reflect on the kind of results we are likely to achieve within our own lifetime, and the hopes which it is worth fostering of a more or less immediate condition of order, of a reliable scheme of chronology which will give us a working basis.

It must be confessed that, in spite of the fact that the subject of Chinese archaeology is more and more attracting the best minds of the age, both in England and elsewhere, we must be prepared, if—as some of us are necessarily doing—we are approaching the subject for the first time, for a state of affairs which would drive the Egyptologist, and still more the classical Archeaologist, to frenzy. But worse than that: we must face the possibility that with regard to the Far East we may perhaps never reach a position at all comparable with that which has been won in other fields. We must ask ourselves indeed, whether we ought to hope to reach such a position. It is as well, before preparing as it were a curriculum of future studies in a new subject, to inquire whether the methods which have served us so well elsewhere—on which we have indeed come to rely—will serve us as well, or even at all, on unfamiliar ground. To those who have glanced superficially—and that is all that the present writer can claim to have done—at the monuments of erudition, which have already mounted high enough to make it a little difficult to take any sort of general view of the field, the question will naturally occur: Why is there as yet no easily accessible handbook of Chinese art-history? Why is there not at present any simplified scheme, chronological and historical, at which the beginner may glance in the hope of gaining an orientation? What advances have been made in these studies which are perceptible to the ordinary man?

This last question is a fortunate one; we can point with satisfaction to tangible evidence of a real improvement in some directions. For the ordinary man, if he is prepared to take a broad view, there is plenty of evidence available to prove that research has not been idle and has, better still, not been unrewarded by results. The learned world, always prone to suspect, always inquisitive about essentials and intolerant of vagueness, has agreed to respect the labours of the pioneers in the Far East. That fact alone will perhaps be enough to reassure one type of sceptic. The

Courtauld Institute, for example, as a body attached to London University, has appointed a professor; students are being trained in the new methods. It is as yet uncertain what the results of this particular evidence of faith will be. I cannot help myself wondering whether the student—in the ordinary sense of the word indicating one who is seeking a degree—is the right person to whom the as yet scarcely incandescent spark can safely be entrusted. I sometimes wonder whether, when a science is in its infancy, the right atmosphere is not rather that in which we encourage research in the more abstruse branches of specialized knowledge; whether a professor surrounded by pupils is not in these matters an anomaly. I feel that no man should be required to pass on a flame which is not yet a flame at all, and that the conception of Chinese studies as part of a curriculum in the ordinary sense of the word may prove to be one which will require considerable modification if Chinese studies are to advance; and surely it is the purpose of bodies such as universities to be the guardians of culture, not primarily spreaders of interest in it, or purveyors of useful instruction of the kind required by the beginner.

I am not at all well acquainted with the conditions prevailing in the institution to which I refer, and I speak naturally with diffidence. But I cannot help wondering whether the primary object of the authorities ought not rather to be to encourage and assist a body of research workers under the direction of a professor rather than a class under a lecturer. Perhaps indeed that is actually the view that is now taken; as one completely outside the academic world, I can only guess what goes on. Suffice it to say that, while research is going on, for the ordinary man the results attained during the last twenty years are extremely striking. The difference between the status of Chinese archaeology and art study then and now is one whose measure can be taken by consulting, for instance, the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and comparing it with the present edition. We have advanced in thirty years or so from a stage of ignorance in which the utmost sophistication passed for the grandeur of barbarity; when what was really comparable to a Wedgwood red-figure vase passed for an Attic masterpiece of the fifth century before Christ. We have left that stage of ignorance far behind and have advanced from it to a new position which, when it is consolidated, I believe will prove to be the final one.

It is when the sceptic inquires further that he will find matter for the exercise of his powers of ridicule and his zest for the exposure of inadequacy. He will be one, probably, who is accustomed to the methods of the explorers of antiquarian sites in Europe; he will expect to find the archaeological certainties to which he is accustomed. A scheme of chronology in particular will seem to him a *sine qua non*. Excavation under the most ideal conditions, under the direct supervision of those who have all the possible clues at their fingers' ends, undertaken systematically with all the resources of modern science, has given the archaeology of the Mediterranean basin, of Chaldaea and Egypt, of Hungary and Macedonia, a respectable basis of verifiable fact. When the inquirer is

FOUR-HANDLED BRONZE WITH LIGHT GREEN PATINA. Chou Dynasty. Diameter, $9\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Eumorfopoulos Collection. (British Museum.)

TRIPOD OF BRONZE; DARK PATINA. Chou Dynasty.
Height, 9 in.

(Collection of Prof. J. N. Collie, F.R.S.)

A.

B.

A—SQUARE BRONZE *TING*. Shang or beginning of Chou Dynasty. Height, 11 in.
(Chinese National Museum of Antiques.)

B—BRONZE *PO*. Period of Warring States.
(Collection of Prof. C. G. Seligman.)

GILT BRONZE FIGURE OF BEAR. Chou Dynasty.
(Collection of H. J. Oppenheim, Esq.)

told that a bronze like the four-handled piece from the Eumorfopoulos collection [PLATE 61] is one of the principal objects of interest in our collections, and is famous alike in China and Japan, when he is told that the long inscription which it bears has been the subject of detailed correspondence between experts and has been subjected to the closest scrutiny by trained students of ancient scripts, he will expect also to be told something fairly definite about the contribution which this impressive object has made to our knowledge. It is not as though the ancient Chinese script, like that of the Cretans or the Hittites, has been until now a complete mystery and is still only discussible in terms of conjecture. On the contrary, in China itself it has been the subject of a voluminous literature for a period far longer than that during which the hieroglyphs of Egypt have occupied the attention of those who share the culture of the Mediterranean. And yet he will find not only that no certain date within several hundred years can be ascribed to this object; he will find that the inscription itself admits of such wide divergences of interpretation that it may actually be debated, for instance, whether one of the words is a verb or proper name. Again, although the point about the name is perhaps of slight importance in this case, since it does not affect the association of the bronze with a Marquis Hsing, it still remains uncertain *which* Marquis Hsing is meant, and, while Professor Yetts, with commendable caution, points out that it might indicate a holder of that title who may have lived as late as 634 B.C., there is the alternative possibility that the first marquis is indicated, who may have lived some time during the eleventh century B.C. As for the provenance of the bronze vessel (an object so remarkable that in Europe its place of discovery would probably be impossible to keep secret even if this were desired), it is completely uncertain, and the *British Museum Quarterly* (Vol. X, No. 1) is reduced to the indication of a conjectural site based on the probability that the territory of the Hsing family seems to have been in the neighbourhood of the modern Shun te Fu, in the province of Chihli.

It will thus be seen that even an example such as this, furnished with an elaborate and clearly-written inscription which has suffered hardly at all from corrosion, cannot be accurately dated. Still less can the ornamentation be accounted for or explained in any satisfactory way. Professor Yetts, who discusses it at great length in the Introduction to the Eumorfopoulos Catalogue of Bronzes, does not shirk the identification of the animals represented on its sides. He accepts them as elephants. But archaeologists are at a loss to explain the presence, still more the significance, of the elephant in early Chinese art. Some even—and Professor Sirén is among them—though admitting its occurrence where its admission is unavoidable, as in the case of the model of the animal in the Camondo collection, in the Louvre, seem to shrink from its identification where it occurs, as it seems to in the example we illustrate from the Eumorfopoulos collection, as a motive in the field of decoration. Professor Sirén in the volume of "A History of Early Chinese Art" devoted to "The Prehistoric and Pre-Han Periods," refers to it as a "large conventionalized animal of which the head terminates

in a snout or trunk." Mr. Jenyns, in the *British Museum Quarterly*, accepts the elephant motive on the body of the vessel, but doubts it in the appendages of the handles. It is thus clear that even in the identification of so characteristic a form as that of the elephant there is room for doubt. The interpretation of the decorative motives on early bronzes will thus seem to the critic to be still in the realm of conjecture.

What can we glean on the subject of some of the other representations of animals, birds and insects on the bronzes of the primitive periods? One of the most striking of these is the owl. The bronze owl from the Eumorfopoulos collection is an object which at once arouses intense curiosity. It is an amazing compromise between naturalism and convention. The feet are extremely lifelike in comparison with those of the only other known example, from the Sumitomo collection. But here again we have so little background of knowledge of early Chinese culture that it is extremely hard for us to know in what light to look on such an object as this. We are loath to think of it as merely a quaint toy, like the curious pottery birds made by the Martin brothers in Southall in the 1890's, which are of similar construction, and apparently equally unrelated either to utility or mythology. Here again Professor Yetts has managed, with his usual exhaustive industry to find something and something very interesting, to say; in his remarkably thorough Introduction to the Eumorfopoulos Catalogue, the passage on the uses of owl soup is perhaps as curious and facinating as any; the difficulty is to be sure that references in Chinese literature have any vital or real connection with archaeological remains such as are represented by this owl. Indeed, one of the most difficult and responsible tasks of the Chinese archaeologist is to investigate Chinese literary sources and collate them with archaeological data; it is a task to which Professor Yetts brings an apparatus of criticism drawn from the most widespread and diverse sources of interest. But when, as here, we approach the territory of the sinologue the questions involved become so technical that I feel disinclined not only to discuss them, for that is out of the question, but even to allude to them. What I do wish to point out is that those who are attempting this task—and there are many others, of all nationalities, besides Professor W. P. Yetts—are doing something which, however slight the results that seem at first sight to reward their labours, is an absolutely essential task, not only for the furtherance of the immediate purposes, the satisfaction of the direct curiosities of those in Europe who take an interest in the subject, but also for a much wider purpose. The whole relationship of Western scholarship to that of the East is involved. A contact between two cultures of such very different antecedents is a matter not only fraught with consequences for a small body of scholars or curio collectors. It has a significance for civilization as a whole. The sceptic, the reasonable doubter who finds the structure of early Chinese Art-history at present very little advanced, who finds its architects at present indeed occupied chiefly in the search for foundations, must remember that all scholarship depends on communication, and that in the Far East there are, and have been for centuries, devoted workers in the field we are now approaching for the first time.

In Far Eastern matters we are new-comers, uninvited guests; we have, as it were, arrived half-way through a conference, and any rude or abrupt attempt to thrust the methods to which we have been accustomed on the assembled company would be disastrous. It is for the thoroughness with which Professor Yetts and his fellow research-workers, including Mr. L. C. Hopkins and others, are reconnoitring this already occupied field that they deserve our respect; for in order to find themselves in a position to co-operate in the work going on there they have first had to earn the respect of the age-long occupants of the site.

It is very important to remember that, although it may be perfectly possible to approach the classification of early Chinese bronzes in the same way as we approach, for instance, Celtic art or the remains of primitive man and achieve real results by chemical research, analysis of style and the scientific investigation of sites, there is another side to the matter. Chinese bronzes of the early periods have probably in no case survived by being handed down intact, as for instance some of our early Biblical manuscripts have. These have in every case of which we know, with a few possibly exceptions recorded by sinologues, passed through periods during which they have disappeared, either by being accidentally lost and buried or be being actually immured in tomb chambers. But certainly as early as the

Unsuccessful attempt to haul a Sacred Bronze Tripod out of the Ssû River, B.C. 219.

Bas-relief of the Han Dynasty. This part of one of the famous Shantung bas-reliefs depicts the legend concerning the loss of the nine celebrated bronze tripods, the palladia of the kingdom (*v.* p. xiii), in the Ssû River, *ca.* 333 B.C. The Emperor sent a recovery expedition in 219 B.C., but as a tripod was dragged to the surface a dragon arose from inside it and bit through the cords. The vessel was never again found.

Han dynasty their reappearance, through chance discovery (seldom, it seems, through intentional excavation), has aroused enormous interest among the Chinese. The finding of ancient bronzes has actually been recorded in monumental sculpture (see illustration on p. 51), and references in literature also testify to the reverence felt for such relics of antiquity.

But the chief interest for the Chinese in these discoveries has lain in the value they have possessed for those engaged in the study of the Chinese script. This fact has produced a host of problems with which the sinologue is alone competent to deal. Certainly one of the most complete treatments of this aspect of the subject in any European language is that embodied in the Introduction and text of the Catalogue of Chinese Bronzes in the Eumorfopoulos Collection by Professor Yetts. So lucid is the treatment of the technical questions involved in these studies by Professor Yetts that I can confidently recommend those who are even superficially interested in the subject to glance at these volumes. The forms of early Chinese script have themselves an appeal not only to curiosity, but to the aesthetic sense, which makes even a slight acquaintance with them a matter of absorbing interest. Even those who are perhaps not interested in bronzes in particular, but merely in Chinese art as a whole, will find it impossible to avoid noticing and feeling the importance of this aspect of the subject. As writing is for the Chinese not only a means of communication, but an art, the most untrained eye will find itself following with ever-increasing fascination the varied rhythms, the intricate designs of symbols whose meaning has no concern for them. It will not be long, before the difference between genuinely ancient writing and the subsequent efforts of epigraphic revivalism becomes susceptible, even for the completely ignorant, not perhaps of detection, but at any rate of appreciation. When this appreciation has been reached the would-be connoisseur is well on the way to an understanding of the nature of one of the essential features of his subject. The sceptic who doubts the achievements of the pioneers in this new field must at least grant that the standard of criticism is being raised by these investigations, if it is being raised by any; and he will come to perceive, I think, that their value is not confined to epigraphical specialization alone, but has a bearing on the whole subject, viewed even from the most generalized aesthetic standpoint. The association between the fine arts in general and the specialized art of calligraphy has in China been so close that not only drawing and painting, but design and modelling, the whole architecture of form in art, has been affected by it. I even believe that the development of design in what for want of a better phrase we must call Chinese lettering will in the future, as the studies of the experts proceed, be found to involve aesthetic principles which may here be seen in their clearest form, principles which students of European typography will recognize as germane to their own closest concerns, and capable perhaps of revealing to them aspects of that general art of graphic disposition of type-spacing and of page planning which is becoming so important in the present age. The merest beginner, who has just learned to recognize the familiar square reign-mark on porcelain of the Ch'ien Lung period, or has noticed the artistic effect with which seals

A—MIRROR (back view).
T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 608–906.)
Diameter, 6¼ in.
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

B—LADY'S TOILET BOX.
Han Dynasty.

Eumorfopoulos Collection.
(British Museum.)

(For painting inside lid *v.* PLATE 72.)

BRONZE, INLAID WITH GOLD AND SILVER. Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220).
Height, 19 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.

(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

are attached to inscriptions on paintings, is conscious of elements of design in Chinese art which are inherent in the respect for ancient characters: elements of symmetry and asymmetry, of the relation of curve to angle, of detail to spacing, which are to be found in the art of no other country. Chinese design has gained from its relation to writing what no other art can boast in equal degree, except our own and, of course, that of Japan—a sense of relative speeds. The innumerable stages of the vast interval which separates the archaic and static forms of script from the cursive have provided Chinese design with a range of elements, each perfectly autonomous and distinct, which offer possibilities of recombination only comparable to those of the notes in the scale of a keyboard instrument. The Chinese draughtsman or designer inherits by virtue of his training the disposal of a choice of variations of *tempo* to which even the artists of the Near East can scarcely ever achieve access; and when, as has happened occasionally in the history of the art of these two extremities of Asia, reciprocal influences have occurred and supplied China or Persia with the key to each other's music, a perfection and richness of harmony has resulted whose echoes seem to challenge the most classically organized polyphonies of design which European civilization can boast.

In touching here for a moment on the splendours of the T'ang Empire —for naturally it is to this phase of art that we have been alluding— reference may perhaps be made, not inappropriately, to a characteristic of Chinese and Japanese art which to the observer schooled in Hellenic canons is strikingly evident. I refer to the totally different conceptions of modelling in the round which prevail among those who have been affected by these canons, and those who have not. It is a conception of modelling which does not only affect human or animal figures, but is equally evident in the design of a handle or the attachment of a spout. The interest of the European has concentrated on the *dis*crete, that of the Oriental on the *con*crete. The separation of the arms of a standing figure from its trunk was a problem which the Greek sculptor seems to have attacked with the conscious itch of a sympathetic naturalist who helps a butterfly to emerge from its chrysalis. To divest the living form of all that interferes with freedom, all that muffles it up and conceals it from the sun and air, is a gesture recognizably Greek. It is a gesture of the athlete, and the athlete as an ideal in art is not a Chinese phenomenon. I refuse to believe that there is anything inherently impossible in supposing that it ever will be; but in the past, as we know it, admiration for victors in athletic contests is not a subject familiar in poetry and still less one discernible as a theme in art. The Chinese vase, whether of bronze, jade or porcelain, has almost never the character or associations of a trophy in the proper sense of the word, as far as we know at present. Rewards for service on hunting expeditions are recorded, it is true; but such events as Marathon races, or indeed any competitive athletics, seldom appear to be recorded, though there is no reason to suppose that they may not have occurred. Chariot races are more in keeping with the spirit of the age. In fact the horse plays an extremely important part in early Chinese art, and it is in relation to the horse rather than the human figure that

Chinese powers of modelling in the round emerge in a form which permits comparison on a fair footing with Western art; we notice in this connection those features even more obviously underlined than in other branches of art, features for which Chinese art had become famous long before the present age, and for which we shall continue, no doubt, as long as interest in the subject persists, to look to Chinese rather than any other art.

What I refer to, of course, is a quality which we all recognize in Chinese art, but do not always trouble to attempt to specify except in terms either of condemnation or appraisement. It is in terms of value that we usually consider what is really at present for the enormous majority a plaything rather than a serious concern. But those who have thought more on the subject than I can claim to have done, occupied as I have been with minor problems of connoisseurship, with the insignificant preferences of a dilettante, have pointed out to me that in all those arts where there prevails what one might describe as a mediaeval situation, several common characters can be found which may form the subject of a theoretical estimate. One of these is absence of analytic interest. It is a quality evident in most Chinese plastic art except for a few brief phases, of which the " horse periods " are instances; in fact, it is hardly, perhaps, too much to say that in no arts except calligraphy and painting did the analytic attitude find expression comparable to that with which we are familiar in those periods of European art which have been regarded as enlightened. The mere charms, the very merits of Chinese art, are evidence of this. What you do not take to pieces you cannot put together badly.

When the Chinese are forced for a moment into logic by the imperious demands of trade, as in much of the design of those later objects which formed articles of export, such as the enamels of Canton, we see that they are sublimely inconsiderate. That things do not quite fit is merely unfortunate; to regard such a thing as worth troubling about would be absurd—this one imagines is their attitude. How delightful! We are spared the horrors of mechanical exactitude which make the products of our own age so repellent. We are spared the atmosphere of the engineering shop, the hideous intricacies and precisions of the blue-print and the diagram; the mathematical problems which bristle on every side as soon as one allows oneself to wonder why diameters and circumferences are not entirely compatible. One makes the exciting discovery in fact, at an early stage of one's acquaintance with Chinese art, that not only is there no Chinese Pindar, no Hercules, no Panathenaic champion, no 'varsity sports, no Eugene Sandow, but also there is no Chinese Euclid, no Chinese trigonometry, no Chinese conic sections! Unless we misinterpret " The Nightingale," Hans Andersen's best and most Chinese story, there is also no Chinese *pi*. The Chinese craftsman therefore has very often to do by feeling what we do by measurement and conscious plan. He may therefore produce—and often does—objects of a hideous monstrosity which are as frightening as any of the abortions of Nature, forms all the more terrible in that they have not even the spice of malice, not even a saving humour of ingenuity. But, on the other hand, we are

seldom so bored and disgusted even with the most obvious examples of Chinese mass production as we are with our own mechanized art. The Chinese bogy may frighten the child or the neurotic; it does not insidiously affect the very texture of our thoughts. We do not find that the images we meet have that appallingly clinging quality which is so distressing a feature of our own bad art, so that almost any of us can mentally construct with shocking fidelity the most nauseatingly sentimental pictures, the exact look of a hotel boudoir, the very linoleum patterns of provincial bathrooms. When we say there is always something weak about Chinese design we are only expressing the absence of these qualities which have so double a character in our own art, which are capable of raising it to heights and sinking it into abysses which are unknown to the more equable Chinese. It is now the fashion to apply the adjective "strong" to all Chinese objects which are considered good. I have on the whole chosen for the illustrations to this article few objects which I think are not in their way masterpieces, and fewer still to which I think the epithet "strong" can be rightly applied. I could have even further emphasized this point were I anxious to argue it.

At any rate, it will be agreed that the bold and barbaric aspect of the subject has been given but a small place in these pages. Perhaps one of the few exceptions might be considered to be the great tripod [PLATE 62] from the Collie collection. There is a columnar massiveness about its legs, a decision about its ears, which give it the air of a veritable Clydesdale among vessels of ritual. But those who have read the brilliant piece of analytic criticism to which Mr. Koop has subjected the construction of the design in the description of specimens which forms so interesting a part of the text of his book on Chinese Bronzes, where this piece was first illustrated, will immediately recognize that even here the Chinese artist has not subjected the geometric elements with which he has had to deal—the three feet, the circle formed by the top, the symmetry imposed by the ogre masks on part of the side-surface—to the same sort of perhaps rather brutal discipline which we feel a Greek would not have spared them. We must look, in Chinese art, rather for imagination and profusion than for what we are accustomed to regard as logic. We must expect to find only at rare intervals, during brief moments of intellectual freedom and activity, that true classicism, that perfect control, of which we have, wrongly, I think, but comprehensibly, lately got a little tired in some phases of our own art, notably that of the Renaissance and the seventeenth century.

But I think that we shall come to recognize more and more clearly as our studies proceed that the Chinese have had a task of unique interest, to which no European parallel is perhaps genuinely applicable. The phase of European art which we can loosely call, without fear of misunderstanding in these days of enlightenment, when a book like Mr. Roger Hinks's "Carolingian Art" can almost be described as a popular work, the Gothic phase, has had a very brief period of supremacy and reached but a very minor degree of complexity compared with that which was achieved by the analogous, and indeed cognate, phase of Chinese art,

a phase which is indeed extended over so large a section of the past of China and comes down so near to the present, with so few intervals of intermission and disturbance, that it may properly be thought of as describing and including the complete orbit, and as constituting no more a *phase* of Chinese art than classicism in the Mediterranean area. It was indeed only during those epochs of Chinese history during which a cosmopolitan and eclectic culture had some chance of flourishing—chiefly in the first millennium of our era and during the two or three centuries which preceded it—that China succeeded in creating what one may describe as the classicism of the Gothic motive. Before that time feudal China was as remote and perhaps as provincial as feudal Russia or feudal Scotland. After that, circumstances beyond her own control shut her off from all but her own preoccupations until the first emissaries of Western confusion and Western enterprise attracted her unwilling and supercilious attention.

But during that period, which we may perhaps extend not illegitimately to cover fifteen hundred years, China had time to perform a task which may well fill us with wonder. Not only did she incorporate themes which she drew from Western and Indian sources, themes of the widest cultural import, but she was able consciously to impose on the meanders of the Gothic north, on the labyrinthine interlacements and involutions of that vast Northern Asian repertory of design whose character has been so brilliantly established by Professor Strzygowski, a potentiality of classic repose which is the antithesis of chaos. It was during this glorious fifteen hundred years that China attained once for all what all the subsequent centuries never succeeded either in inducing her weakly to adulterate or passionately to sacrifice—the inalienable, the sovereign heritage of her dignity. Professor Sirén, in the first volume of his "History of Early Chinese Art," has well pointed out the analogies, not necessarily, perhaps, anthropologically certain, but certainly critically significant, of the earliest Chinese art with that of the Maya. The earliest Chinese art, like the art of all peoples in a state of incipient development, is impressive because it is designed to impress; it is never truly dignified, because what we now regard as true dignity is a conception foreign to early peoples, and only perfected by the Chinese, as by ourselves, at a stage when philosophy had arisen and statesmanship began to be the conscious preoccupation of the powerful. It is significant that, just as in the Ch'in and Han dynasties we find for the first time a decorative, playful, and even humorous, note in design, so too we also find that it is at this time that the perfectly plain piece, relieved only by a few mouldings, becomes an obviously intentional creation, and not merely the result of leaving a piece unornamented. "Dislike of a blank space is marked," says Professor Yetts of the primitive style in bronze. But this could not be said of Han art; it is here that we meet for the first time in unmistakable form that elegant simplicity which is, in our eyes, by now far more definitely associated with the word "Chinese" than ever before.

We have learned to know those aspects of Chinese art which are not grotesque; we have learned also to recognize as manifestations of the

GILT BRONZE FIGURE OF BUDDHA. Early T'ang Dynasty.
Height, 8 in.

(Collection of Sir Montagu Pollock, Bart.)

GILT BRONZE KUAN YIN, with halo and stand. Northern Ch'i Dynasty.
Height, 14¼ in.

classic spirit those adaptations of primitive designs, those softenings of primitive asperity, which at first we could hardly distinguish, so unfamiliar was our subject-matter, from the originals.

But what is really so interesting about the study of early Chinese art, especially of bronzes and jades, is that we have so large a number of specimens to illustrate a phase of cultural development about which curiosity is at present particularly keen, a phase about which we have very little evidence in material form and in literature other than Chinese—far too little. Professor Sirén has compared the forms and spirit of the earliest Chinese art-traditions to those of the Maya people. It is possible that there is a similarity, not necessarily, as I have said above, racial, but developmental. But though I am not one of those who wish to prove that the Chinese have been Confucian gentlemen from time immemorial, though I am as well prepared to contemplate the use of the word " savage " in relation to the Chinese as in relation to the followers of Boadicea, I believe that it is probable that Maya art should be regarded with wholly different feelings from those which we reserve for all early Chinese works, except perhaps the neolithic pottery discovered by Professor Anderssen in Kansu province. The Chinese were different not only from the Maya peoples, who had after all certainly no acquaintance with bronze, but even from our own Celtic ancestors, in this respect, that they very early adopted written signs and inscribed them both on bone and on metal. When we reflect on what we know of early Western culture we shall find, I think, that the phase represented by these inscribed bronzes is one for which no parallel has been found in Western art of epigraphy which is at all comparable in completeness. But more than this: early Chinese philosophical literature, of which in the early Taoist books quoted by Mr. Waley in his recent book, " The Way and Its Power " and in Mencius, we have valuable remains, represents a phase of thought which, by its nearness in time, but not in feeling, to a completely primitive stage of mentality such as that of which we read in the Book of History, especially in the passage quoted by Mr. Waley in his Introduction, constitutes a unique document for the study of the development of man's moral consciousness.

The subsequent history of China offers, it is true, no Plato to our expectation, no Athens. But these were characteristically Mediterranean phenomena. Their beauty is peculiar, and its very intensity deprives it of general validity. The problems faced by the Chinese race, the conditions from which they forged their culture, are, in that they affected so large a section of mankind, perhaps as peculiar as those which we find in Greece, where the scale is so incomparably diminutive; and we must reflect that with the development of civilization it is unwise to deal as though we had any scale of relative time-values. It is often lightly assumed that the Chinese race and its culture is necessarily and inherently inferior to that of the Mediterranean. But we are looking at a picture, perhaps, in the case of China, where the scale is wholly different. With our eyes accustomed to the clear outlines of our tiny Mediterranean patterns, where order is so clearly perceptible and brilliance so readily enjoyed, we

must not judge a people so vast in extent yet so closely bound together as the Chinese. With our sense of time accustomed to what seem to us (often from too optimistic a standpoint) to be the regular rhythms of the West, we must be careful before we commit ourselves to a judgment, about the evolution of a civilization where all the units not only of space, but also necessarily of time too, are different. "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay," Tennyson said. But what is a cycle of Cathay? Chinese history has never been remarkable for smoothness; far more sudden storms have swept over those vast plains far more violent torrents have swept down from those mountains, than any of which we can conceive. Nature in China is not our nature, time not our time, or space our space. The only constant factor is man. Here we are on safe ground. Nature may have been in China something wholly alien to us; human nature has not. If we reflect for a moment what is unique about any of those achievements of our civilization which we may be tempted to show with proprietary pride to the Chinese as evidences of our superiority, we shall discover that it is not in any sense their content. There is nothing in them that the human mind in China has not also met, any more than in a Chinese landscape there are moon-mountains. The difference is in the synthesis, in the dexterity with which the ingredients are combined, in the speed with which they are cooked, in the total and unique effect of their flavour. They have nourished us, and we live, think, and praise God. We think there is no table kept in all the world like ours; that foreigners live on toads, dogs, birds'-nests and other such rubbish. But we are wrong. The Chinese eat differently, but they eat; and man does not live by bread alone. We think that the banquet of Plato was a more elegant symposium than China's luxury could ever have devised; we hate the Eastern apparatus of her feasts. What would our manners have looked like at her dinner-parties? Do we really think that the aristocracy of Ch'ang-an lived on chop-suey and thought of nothing but mah-jong? Chinese literature happens to reveal something to which the different lens of our own is ill adjusted. Few Europeans have much idea what Chinese books are about. The process of interpretation by which we may eventually come to understand them as we understand French literature will take centuries. A few pioneers only have as yet spied out the land.

Where did Horace learn his art? May we not ask ourselves whether until contact between two peoples is established, as it was between Greeks and Romans, the potentialities of either have been fully revealed? A Japanese translation of Shakespeare which can be read intelligently by I wonder how many Europeans has been praised in the hearing of the present writer, and praised by one whose words are seldom spoken in vain, as the best translation in any foreign language of our poet. The exploration of our literature by Chinese has hardly yet begun. There are those who hope it never may. What would Rome have been like if Athens had not happened to be near? How shall we say there may or should be barriers between Europe and Asia? Look at the map; perhaps one day people will bicycle to Peking. China may soon be our neighbour; she

is closer to us now than ever before, but when she is closer still not only will the magnetic field which includes us both be larger, but it will be different.

I have written so far as though our chief interest in Chinese art centred necessarily round the early periods down to the end of the T'ang dynasty. It is with that epoch that Professor Sirén closes his study. But the T'ang dynasty, which ended in A.D. 907, was only the beginning, just as from one point of view it was the end, of a sequence. It would be idle to pretend that T'ang art itself had the same connection with that of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as, for instance, our own Renaissance art had with the eighteenth century. Actually its influence survived far more, in design at any rate, in the conservative atmosphere of Japan, where Buddhist art, which reached its height in early T'ang, survived so much longer. I could show Japanese porcelain with designs in the purest T'ang taste as late as the eighteenth century. But traces can be found in the minor arts—always the last to lose their connection with the past—even in China. The phoenix design on the lacquer box [PLATE 80,B] is an example. So too, both in shape and design, is the cloisonné enamel vase [PLATE 79]. But the art of the Ming dynasty on the whole, though it gained qualities of its own, reflects its vividness with the dim softening effect of dull silver. The change began under the Sung dynasty (A.D. 960—1279), and under the Yüan there began a new phase. "Yüan reaction against the brooding mysticism of the Southern Sung," says Mr. Waley ("Introduction to the History of Chinese Painting," 1923), "continued under the Mings, who, amused by the glittering surfaces of life, did not desire to probe them. The Ming dynasty, with its passion for the tangible, is a revival of the T'ang ; but it was a T'ang without verve, without grandeur. Under the Mongols, China had been cosmopolitan. Now, just as fast friends, after a stranger has left their company, draw up again round the fire to enjoy the pleasures of exclusion, so China withdrew into the comfortable glow of her own self-sufficiency."

How well the last phrase of this beautiful sentence reflects the spirit of the later art of China! Only in painting, among the major arts, was there an occasional stirring. Sculpture and bronze casting, to us among the chief arts of early China, became mere crafts. But painting did not. It is because of this that I have been careful to include some good specimens of sixteenth and seventeenth-century art in the form of fans painted by celebrated masters [PLATES 83—85]. It is true that among us fan painting was seldom more than a mere decorative art. Very few great masters —Fragonard is perhaps one of those few—ever drew or painted on fans in Europe. But neither painting in general nor fan painting were either decadent or merely decorative arts in later China. It is true that the traditions of the T'ang dynasty were in the sixteenth century quite lost, were indeed as unknown to those times as the art of Zeuxis or Apelles to the Renaissance—not that that prevented their being solemnly discussed either in China or Europe. But art in China had in the sixteenth century become a private preoccupation of the educated man, as indeed it might have in Europe but for the Flemings, the Dutch and other Northerners. The monasticism and the grand public life of the T'ang dynasty produced

an art which disappeared with Buddhism and a cosmopolitan upper class. The arts which the changes of successive times produced, though not by any means uninfluenced by Persia, by the West, have never again until the present day been deeply, been spiritually influenced. The art of the Far East is not over, but it is in a stage of transition.

TYPICAL FORMS OF BRONZE VESSELS.

A—JADE RITUAL BLOCK. Age unknown.
Height, 3 in.
(British Museum.)

B—JADE ORNAMENT. Han Dynasty.
Height, 5 in.
Eumorfopoulos Collection
(British Museum.)

A—WHITE JADE BOWL, with pendent rings. Ch'ien Lung Period. On the outside the wedding symbol; on the inside bats and peaches of longevity. Butterfly handles.
(Collection of His Majesty the King, and included by his gracious permission.)

B—CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL BOX-COVER. Ming Dynasty.
(Collection of Professor C. G. Seligman.)

WINE BEAKER. Chou Dynasty.
Height, 8⅝ in.

(*Formerly in the hands of Messrs. Tonying.*)

PAINTED INTERIOR OF LID OF LADY'S TOILET BOX, BRONZE (Plate 65 B). Han Dynasty.
Height and diameter, 6½ in.

Eumorfopoulos Collectio
(British Museum

BRONZES AND THE MINOR ARTS:

JADES, ENAMELS, LACQUER, ETC.

By W. W. Winkworth

CRITICAL DESCRIPTION OF PLATES

PLATE 61.—This remarkable bronze, with its elephant designs and its extraordinary inscription inside, is so fully discussed in Professor Yett's Introduction to the "Catalogue of Bronzes in the Eumorfopoulos Collection" that it seems out of place to attempt to add to that learned exposition. It is possible that this specimen dates as early as 1100 B.C. It may, on the other hand, possibly be as late as the seventh century B.C. It has been buried, or was more probably found in a tomb. It is not very heavily encrusted; the surface is smooth, the detail sharp showing the fine quality of the bronze. The composition of these early pieces includes nothing but copper and tin, with a high percentage of the latter. This gives a beautiful pure bronze, not liable to decay to the same extent as the bronzes of slightly later times, such as the Han dynasty (206 B.C.—A.D. 220). The later bronzes usually contained a certain percentage of lead, which made them easier to cast, because the metal, when alloyed with lead, fuses at a lower temperature. The best collection of ancient bronzes in the world is probably that of Baron Sumitomo at Osaka. It is probable that this piece would have gone to Japan if it had not been acquired for the nation with the rest of the Eumorfopoulos collection. It would no doubt have been sold at a high price. I think I am divulging no official secrets when I say that Mr. Eumorfopoulos paid £4000 for it. It is probably one of the most important bronzes of the early period in existence. Its four handles are a rare feature; I know of no others. From the point of view of the scholar, Chinese, Japanese, or Western, its inscription in ancient characters, incised on the bottom inside, is a great feature of interest. Its shape is that known to Chinese cataloguers as "tui." It formed part of the Chinese Exhibition at Burlington House, winter 1935—36.

PLATE 62.—This bronze in real life has an absolutely different appearance from the last. Instead of the light green colour which gives the last example the appearance of being made of dull green jade, this tripod has a dark brownish tone. It was no doubt excavated some time ago, and the incrustations which perhaps formerly covered it have been carefully removed to show the design of T'ao Tieh ogre-faces. It probably dates from at least as early a period as the last piece. Where the original

surface is left it has a smooth blackish patina, another evidence of the fine bronze of which the early pieces were cast. Professor Collie, who is a well-known collector of Chinese and other rarities, has been able, from his knowledge of chemistry, to analyse many of these early bronzes. Mr. Koop, in whose book this piece is illustrated, has pointed out the curious fact that, although the design is perfectly satisfactory, it is by no means regular by our standards. There are three "ogre faces"; the side we see in the photograph shows parts of two. The third appears complete on the other side. The two loop handles, with their strong form tapering from a thick top to a narrower base where they join the rim, do not, therefore, correspond with the ridges which form the central line of each face between the eyes (which can be seen on the right and left bottom corners of the design). With its massive legs and strong rim, this vessel is one of the most splendid examples of the Ting or tripod form known to me.

PLATE 65 (A).—The bronze mirror from the Victoria and Albert Museum here shown was not seen at Burlington House, as loans from this museum were kept as few in number as possible. In spite of a few incrustations, the smooth surface of the metal is evident in the photograph. It is of quite a different alloy from the preceding pieces, containing as it does antimony and silver to make the mirror surface (on the other side) brighter. This other side is very slightly convex, to give the mirror the power of diminishing what is reflected in it, like some of our own small hanging mirrors of glass, which will reflect a whole room, as this would reflect a whole face.

The principal feature of the design is a mandarin-duck, a species much admired in China. The mandarin-duck with its mate is the Chinese love-bird. It has a beautiful crest and gay plumage and may be seen in real life in many of our public gardens, where it acclimatizes well. Its webbed feet are well shown on the mirror back. A smaller flying duck of the same kind is seen on the rim just above it to the right. To the right again, and below it, is a bird of some species I cannot identify catching a bee or wasp. By turning the plate upside down another mandarin-duck will be seen. Here the little feathers which stick out below the wings just above the tail are well shown. These are a feature of this bird. These naturalistic bird-forms on T'ang mirrors are by no means the commonest. The more common designs represent the flying phoenix and other mythical creatures.

PLATE 65 (B).—This covered box is a typical product of the Han dynasty, when the variety of shapes was very great, and shows a much more conscious artistry than is to be found in the art of earlier periods. The design painted on the inside of the lid is reproduced in colour [PLATE 72]. Very few of these painted bronzes are known.

PLATE 66.—The square form of this piece is typical of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.—A.D. 20). It is even found in the tomb-pottery of that date. The gold and silver inlay is of unusual beauty. The student of Celtic art will observe with interest the analogies between a design of this type and that of the famous mirror in the Gloucester Museum. These resemblances

A—JADE CUP. Third or fourth century.
(Imperial Palace, Pekin.)

B—JADE ROCK. Style of Sung Dynasty.
(Imperial Palace, Pekin.)

A—INK STONE. Sung Dynasty.
(Imperial Palace, Pekin.)

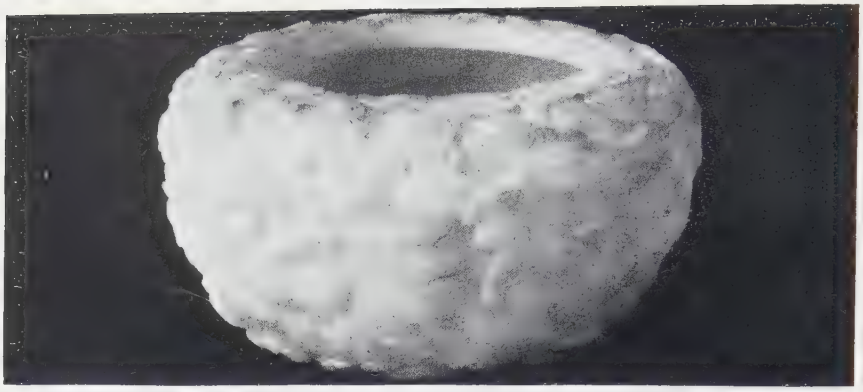
B—BACK VIEW OF JADE ROCK (PLATE 73 B).

A—JADE RING, one side brown, the other side green *(see* Text).
Diameter, 5½ in.

(British Museum.)

B—LACQUER BOX, dated Yung-Lo. Yung-Lo Period (A.D. 1403–1424).
Diameter, 5 in.

(Private Collection.)



A—BOWL OF MUTTON-FAT JADE IN THE FORM OF A BUDDHIST ALMS BOWL. Ch'ien Lung period.
Diameter, $6\frac{5}{8}$ in.

(Lady Lever Art Gallery.)

B—CYLINDRICAL VASE OF WHITE JADE. Eighteenth century.
Diameter, 8 in.

(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

are by no means accidental. China at this date was open to many influences, and it is impossible not to conclude that these beautiful C-shaped curves derive from the same sources as inspired the Celtic artist.

Similar designs are seen on Han lacquer, and important excavations in the north of China and in Corea have lately been made by Professor Umehara, of Japan, which have revealed analogous examples.

Plate 67.—The Buddhist art of the T'ang dynasty and just before is one of the most interesting to Europeans of all Far Eastern art. The very similar art of Japan is also magnificent. Professor Langdon Warner has written a splendidly illustrated monograph on the work of this period in Japan called "Japanese Sculpture of the Suikō Period."

The present writer made a large drawing of this piece in Chinese ink, which he sent to the late Professor Roger Fry, who did so much to spread an interest in early Chinese sculpture in this country at a time when it was hardly yet known. Professor Roger Fry was ill at the time, and the author hoped that the drawing of this benign figure would aid in his cure, which did indeed shortly follow. But it is to be suspected that the author's shocking draughtsmanship was perhaps more effective than anything else in rousing the afflicted art historian from his bed.

The little ornament like a series of upturned fleurs-de-lis on the base of this figure is a specially charming feature. The similarity of this form to the fleurs-de-lis of European heraldry is not accidental. They both have a common origin in the art of Persia and early Greece, like the heraldic eagle of Prussia and the flying bird or phoenix with upturned wings seen on T'ang pottery.

Plate 69 (a).—This square block with a round hole in the middle is a mysterious object, about which Chinese archaeologists are at present still unable to tell us much that we should like to know. The form is indeed obviously so ancient that it is possible we shall never know what it was originally intended for. But it has been known in China, doubtless from pieces at some time accidentally found, at least as early as the Sung dynasty (A.D. 960—1279). At this time there was keen interest in early bronzes and jades. This particular form, or rather a variant of it, was actually rendered in the porcellanous stoneware of the Ko kilns of that time. There is a particularly fine example in the British Museum. The variant usually seen in porcelain imitations, which, though uncommon in the Ming dynasty, one often sees in the revivalist porcelain of the early eighteenth century, has little notches on the corners, and sometimes other ornament. Old pieces of jade of this form are also sometimes recarved with these notches. A specimen is in the British Museum, but it is not usually exhibited. This specimen, which has unusually beautiful markings, is quite small and quite plain. There are some fascinating facts in the book on Chinese Art published about 1935 by Kegan Paul about this sort of object, and a good one is illustrated.

Plate 69 (b).—This remarkable object has been described in various ways; but in the opinion of the author no certain theory of its original use is at present forthcoming. It has been called an axe-head, but this seems unlikely. The design is one of those adaptations of early ornament

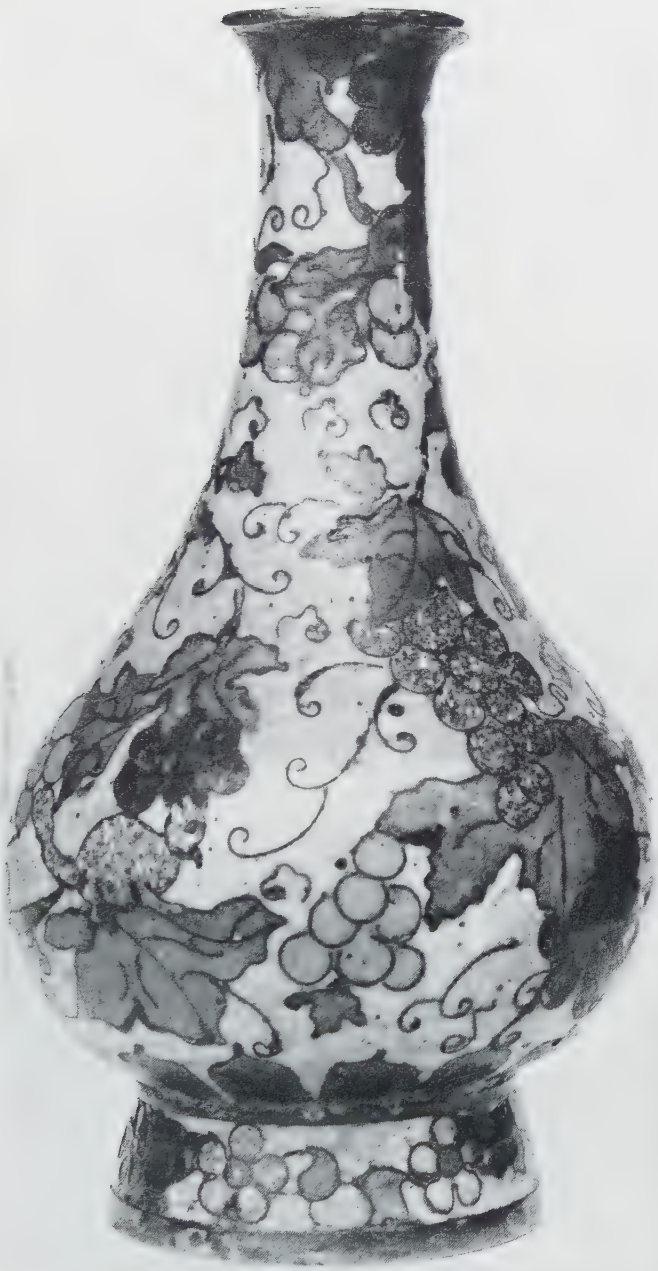
such as is found on bronzes and jades of the Chou dynasty. It is of amazing delicacy and beauty of workmanship; the low relief is beautifully varied only at one point by a grooved motive which seems analogous to that seen on some bronzes of the third century B.C., one of the best periods of Chinese art. Pieces of jade such as this are now very rare. They are much admired among the Chinese, and only reach Europe, if at all, at very high prices. An inspection of this and similar specimens will soon teach the collector how to avoid the many imitations of this work which are available at more moderate prices, and are of much more recent date, many of them—indeed the majority—no more than fifty years old. They are still made in large quantities to-day, and "ancient jade" still forms a large item in the export trade of China. Bronzes and early pottery are much safer ground for the European collector, who may obtain genuine examples of early date from many reliable dealers.

PLATE 71.—One of the chief beauties of this bronze is the colour of its incrustations, which form a combination of green and red like a beech-wood in early spring. In later time in China, bronzes were not used for their original purposes, whatever those may have been. Plants were actually grown in them; they became simply decorative vases. For such purposes a piece like this would be ideal. I wish that present-day collectors would take a hint from the Chinese of past times and use bronzes in this way again. It is quite easy to have metal or glass liners fitted to them.

This piece probably belongs to a slightly later age than our first two illustrations, although the type of design is the same. There is an artistry about the disposal of the heads of monsters in relief—purely decorative features of course—and the contrast of plain and ornamented surfaces which shows a conscious feeling for beauty. However, the dating of bronzes on aesthetic grounds is at present far too unsafe for an opinion to be ventured. It is only when we come to a piece like the next that we can say with perfect confidence, "Here, archaeology apart, is the art of a nation where elegance and simplicity were understood." This growth of a respect for simplicity I attribute—I have no safe grounds for doing so, I admit—to the influence of Taoism. "Give them simplicity to look at: give them the Uncarved Block to hold," says the author of the Tao Tê Ch'ing, translated by Mr. Waley. (See "The Way and Its Power: A Study of Tao Tê Ch'ing," by A. D. Waley. Allen and Unwin, 1934.)

PLATE 72.—This plate represents a painted design on the inside of the lid of the covered box represented on PLATE 65 (B). This graceful bird represents a type of design which was new in the Han dynasty. The pigments appear to be a sort of body-colour. Painting was already an art in the Han dynasty, and information about it, largely through recent excavations, is gradually accumulating. We do not, however, yet know enough to identify the work of any individual artist.

PLATE 73 (A).—The date of this beautiful jade cup is difficult to determine. It may well be as late as the T'ang dynasty. But I think it is probably rather earlier. The reproduction is taken from a collotype plate in the Ku Kung, a catalogue of objects in the collection of the late Imperial House of China. The shape of the handle is certainly found



CLOISONNE ENAMEL. Fifteenth century.
Height, 8½ in.

(British Museum.)

CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL. Incised Mark of Ching Tai period.
Height, 14 in.

(Private Collection.)

on T'ang pieces, and also occurs earlier; I know of it on bronzes of the Han dynasty. I do not know the size of the piece, but it is probably only a little larger than the size of the photograph.

PLATE 73 (B).—The landscape carving of this jade rock is typical of the painting of the Sung and Yüan dynasties. The contours of the mountain forms are rendered with painter-like skill. Chinese artists attached much importance to the rendering of these contour lines in landscapes. Are these in the style of Tung Yüan (tenth century) or Fan Kuan (eleventh century)? Few certain works by these artists survive, though numerous existing pictures are ascribed to them. I feel sure myself that the carver of this piece knew about such matters, even if he was not the contemporary of the artist I mention. The same cannot be said for the carvers of most of the jade landscape pieces one sees, charming though they often are. The rendering of the pine trees is also extremely learned. That, I think, is the proper expression here. The Chinese became very conservative about such matters. Mr. Waley, in his "Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting," translates a passage from the writings of Tung Ch'i-Ch'ang (A.D. 1554—1636): "It is said that in tree-painting one is free to make one's own style. Nothing could be more untrue. For willow trees Chao Po-chü is the standard; for pines, Ma Ho-chih; for withered trees, Li Ch'êng. These laws are of great antiquity and cannot be changed. Slight modifications may, of course, be introduced, provided they do not impinge on the essentials. How absurd to speak of changing the old method and creating a new!"

PLATE 74 (A).—I have no authority for attributing this ink-stone to the Sung dynasty. It bears an inscription by the Emperor Ch'ien-Lung (A.D. 1735—1795), to whom it belonged. But the design of swans swimming on a lake under willow trees seems to me full of the elegant precision of the tenth century, and I cannot help hoping that we have here preserved in stone a specimen of the design of this date, of which nothing survives in painting except perhaps the wall paintings on tombs of the Liang dynasty, which ruled part of China at that time. These wall paintings are much decayed, but they are reproduced very well in a fairly recent number of the Kokka magazine. I should be pleased to tell anyone who writes to me, care of the publishers, which volume they are in. I am perhaps quite wrong in attributing the actual workmanship of this stone to so early a date. It may merely reproduce a painting which reproduces the original.

Ink-stones were used to rub sticks of ink on, being previously wetted from a water-dropper. They were then used like a painter's palette for writing or drawing. I hope the sight of this object will stimulate art lovers to obtain copies of the *Ku Kung* where, like many other rare things, it is reproduced. Oriental booksellers, like Messrs. Kegan Paul, Great Russell Street, and Messrs. Goldstone, Museum Street, or Messers. Quaritch, Grafton Street, can obtain them.

PLATE 74 (B).—The back of the jade rock in the preceding plate. The figure is a Lohan. I quote again from Mr. Waley's "Introduction to the History of Chinese Painting": "The Lohans ('worthy ones'—

Sanskrit *Arhan*; Japanese *Rakan*) were the original disciples of Sakyamuni. In a wider sense a Lohan is an ascetic ripe for annihilation ('Buddhists,' says Mr. Waley, 'object to this term: I do not use it in any technical sense'), one who is about to escape from the Wheel of Life and Death, whose present incarnation is an ante-chamber to Nirvana."

PLATE 75 (A).—It is, again, very difficult to date this piece with any accuracy. It has certainly never been buried or walled up in a tomb. It may well be no older than the Sung dynasty, if as old. But that does not prevent its being in its way a masterpiece. The large spines of the animal are particularly impressive. It is impossible to prove that it is not eighteenth-century. We know, curiously enough, far less about the dating of jades after the Han dynasty than during it and before. "Ming" jades are usually merely so called because they seem old and are not excavated pieces. Curiously enough, pieces of good quality which are neither eighteenth century nor "early" are rare.

PLATE 75 (B).—Lacquer is made from the juice of a special tree (*Rhus vernicifera*). It is known in China from the Han dynasty onwards. Yüan examples (fourteenth century) are also known. This example shows the smooth rounded relief characteristic of the lacquers of the Yüan and early Ming dynasties. The design, of interlacing narcissus flowers and leaves, has an unmistakably early flavour. Designs of such beauty are seldom seen in the eighteenth century, if ever. The lacquer is the usual red, coloured with cinnabar. This specimen was originally in the collection of Mr. Bradley, an American, which was sold at Christie's a year or two ago, and consisted chiefly of fine Ming and later porcelain.

PLATE 76 (A).—This is a specimen of the well-known "mutton-fat" jade. The well-distributed design consists of bats among clouds.

PLATE 76 (B).—This would probably be called a writer's brush-pot by dealers. It forms an interesting contrast with the jade rock illustrated on PLATES 73 and 74. Though a beautiful piece of stone and well-carved, it has none of the scholarly accuracy and venerable aspect of the other piece. It is certainly a specimen of the jade work produced in comparatively large quantities for the palaces of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung (A.D. 1735—1795). Its carver was obviously a good craftsman; it is much more deeply undercut than the piece illustrated earlier, and is indeed in some places pierced right through. The beautiful polish to which every part has been subjected gives it almost the appearance of being made of ice.

PLATE 77.—This cupboard front has been made from the leaves of a large eighteenth-century incised lacquer screen. This style of lacquer is learnedly discussed in the "Dictionary of English Furniture," by Percy Macquoid and Ralph Edwards. Its chief interest for us is its use in the splendid furniture of the late seventeenth century in England and France, where it was often adapted to form part of chests and commodes. It is known as "Coromandel" lacquer, doubtless because it was imported into Europe from this region.

PLATE 78.—Cloisonné enamel was introduced into China from the West, probably about the fourteenth century. Whether the "fox and

grapes" pattern as seen in this vase is also a novelty of the same date I am not sure, but I suspect it. It is also called "squirrel and vine." A feature which enables us to distinguish Ming cloisonné from that of the eighteenth century is clearly seen in the photo. The squirrel itself, and also the larger bunch of grapes (right middle), will be seen to have a speckled appearance, rather like a section of sausage. This is simply a way of producing a paler effect by mixing little bits of white and purple enamel. In the eighteenth century pink and purple enamels were available, so there was no need to use this method. Another thing is that the grape-vine's tendrils are indicated by actual metal lines. In later enamels, these lines (which are necessary to keep the colours apart and to give the pattern precision) are usually arranged parallel to each other, forming little canals. This produces rather a dull mechanical effect; no line is allowed to wander about freely on its own, as it is here.

PLATE 79.—The fine vase here shown bears the date Ch'ing-tai (A.D. 1450—1456). This period was celebrated for enamel. Other pieces are known to the author; one in the British Museum, and two in the Victoria and Albert Museum. There is also a third piece in the latter museum, illustrated in Bushell's "Chinese Art," Vol. II, Fig. 86. This is obviously of the Ch'ien Lung period. The shape alone would point to a late date; though very elaborate pieces were made in early times, there is frankly a weakness and over-prettiness about this design that stamps it as the product of an inferior period of taste in enamels. The tell-tale enamel of pink colour (derived, of course, from gold) is also present.

I see no reason to doubt the authenticity of any of the few pieces of obviously Ming enamel I have seen with Ch'ing-tai marks. But it is, of course, essential that the mark should bear signs of being contemporary with the piece itself, and not the addition of a subsequent owner. The piece here illustrated is a good example. The base is thickly gilded. Where it is worn at the edge the gilt is absent, and a slightly coppery bronze is visible. The mark, however, which is deeply cut, is filled with the same gilding which covers the rest of the base. The gilding on the base is evidently original. On the neckband it is almost all worn away: the piece has been much handled. The other important thing is that the mark should be cut with decision, in good regular, neat calligraphy, as in this piece.

PLATE 80.—These two pieces of lacquer richly inlaid with chips of mother-of-pearl illustrate a style of lacquer known as "lac burgauté" when it occurs, as it sometimes does, on porcelain. I admire their bold style. Much finer work was done in this technique both in China and Japan; but the bold specimens, when early, are also very fine and give the beauty of the pearl a different effect. The lower piece is the lid of a box containing an ink-stone.

PLATE 81 (A).—The type of enamel here shown is associated with Canton; but it was also probably made elsewhere. Indeed, we know very little about it at present. It was obviously introduced from Europe, and this specimen is specially interesting because the flower-wreath on the foot is so obviously a copy of a seventeenth-century German design,

as indeed are the figure panels. This gives one the impression of being an early piece, under *direct* European influence. Most of the European designs one sees are very second-hand, though always charming. The tree-branch, with its effect of relief and its shadow cast on the tree-trunk, is an effect which is not seen on the usual sort of European-taste piece, where the tree-drawing usually remains Chinese.

PLATE 81 (B).—The narcissus, which we saw so beautifully used on the lacquer box [PLATE 75 B], appears again here in enamel, on the left-hand of the two cups. These cups are tiny and should be seen to be appreciated. They bear the mark in blue enamel of the Ch'ien Lung period (A.D. 1735–1795). The style of painting is unusually naturalistic, but remains purely Chinese.

PLATE 82.—The rounded angles of the square panels on this red lacquer box are characteristic of Chinese art. Indeed, the soft rounded edges of all the carving here are in excellent taste, far superior to the sharp-cut though skilful effects of carving on the lacquer of the Ch'ien Lung period, which is the sort one usually sees. There is nothing uglier than some specimens of this. The famous throne of Ch'ien Lung in the Victoria and Albert Museum seems to me an unparalleled example of the hideous elaboration to which the unfortunate Chinese craftsman had to resort to please the taste for luxurious novelty which prevailed at that decadent Court. As a document in the history of bad taste the famous throne is, of course, priceless. The fundamental decency of the Chinese, so evident in the quiet breadth of this dignified box, maintained itself wonderfully in the Ch'ien Lung period; but the mass production of bibelots and expensive furniture is so revolting an idea in itself that even the Chinese were not proof against its inherent vileness. It is not so bad with pottery; here the scale of production is naturally large, and certain effects are obtainable only by collaboration. Also the pottery works were far away from the Court, and had, moreover, an export trade to Europe, which kept their ideas fresh. But the monotony of the lacquer, enamel, and jade produced in the Court workshops of Peking is unrivalled. Even then, to the credit of the Chinese craftsman, an occasional piece is really quite nice. But there is never the faintest sign of individuality; an interminable opulence prevails. This sort of thing fulfils very well, perhaps as well as the porcelain of Sèvres, the function of looking expensive. But it must not be mistaken for art.

FANS

Fans are considered in Europe a very minor sort of art object. But in China and Japan they were one of the principal vehicles of good painting. It is true that many very pretty examples were made, mostly in Canton, for export to Europe, especially in the early eighteenth century. These fans have elaborately pierced ivory sticks and handles, and are painted in bright colours by persons who would not have been considered artists at all in China.

LACQUER BOX TOPS INLAID WITH MOTHER-OF-PEARL. Sixteenth century.

(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

A.

B.

C.

FAN PAINTINGS BY YÜN NAN-T'IEN (*see* Text). Later seventeenth century.

Exactly when the folding fan came into China seems a little uncertain; it is said to have been introduced, curiously enough, from Japan. But it was certainly used as a ground for painting on by many of the best artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These fan-paintings were serious works of art, not aiming at mere decoration.

The three fans on PLATE 83 are all by Yün Nan-t'ien, also called Yün Shou-p'ing.

I feel it would be impossible to do better here than quote the words of Mr. Arthur Waley on the subject of this artist. Mr. Waley's essay deals first with a remarkable screen by another artist, Shên Ch'üan, in an English private collection, exhibited at Burlington House and here illustrated [PLATE 14]. But his words apply equally to these fans; for, though the scale here is smaller the same remarks apply. What Mr. Waley says about the beauty of the colour of the screen and the way it is used, not to make a flat pattern merely, but to suggest solidity and the interplay of tones and lights in a rounded form, would obviously apply particularly well to the fan PLATE 83 (c), where the red seeds of the open pomegranate are rendered with just the skill he describes—it is possible even in a photograph to see that. The handwriting of Yün Nan-t'ien's is particularly beautiful and is seen to advantage on these fans. It has great precision, yet also a certain largeness and dignity which are recognizable even to those who do not understand the meaning.

Here is the essay, from the " Year-book of Oriental Art ":

YÜN SHOU-P'ING, CALLED "NAN-T'IEN," 1633—1690

By Arthur Waley

GOOD Chinese paintings of the later periods are almost as rare in Europe as are paintings of early times. This does not mean that they are scarce in China but only that dealers have not considered it worth while to import them. That this is a pity will I think be recognized by anyone who has seen the original[1] of the piece which is reproduced on PLATE 14. No photograph can give any idea of this painting, partly because just those qualities which distinguish it from a thousand other apparently similar works do not show in reproduction, partly because its effect depends so largely upon colour. The difference between this painting and the bogus Shên Ch'üans in European collections is very hard to define. The technical procedure is exactly the same. The composition is adequate, but quite conventional. The whole beauty of the screen lies in the way in which the colours are used to build up an undulating interplay of surfaces and tones. The effect is not in the least that of a flat patchwork of coloured spaces, as seen, for example, in Japanese colour-prints and ordinary modern Chinese flower-pieces. But I doubt if it is much use talking about pictures and shall therefore say something about a painter of this time, Yün Nan-t'ien,

[1] It is a large nine-fold screen painted on silk; here reproduced by kind permission of Mr. Morton Sands, to whom it belongs. As it is glazed the task of photographing it was very difficult.

a little later in date. What follows has of course a certain cultural and literary interest, but has nothing to do with art.

" He was a native of Wu-chin in Kiangsu. He came of good family. . . . He had a turn for painting landscape, but so soon as he saw Wang Hui's work, he knew that he had not the talent to compete with him and said to Hui, ' Brother, I leave this branch of the art to you, for it would pain me to be known as the second landscapist in China.' Upon this he quitted landscape and became a flower-painter . . . yet he did occasionally paint landscape, as, for example, small views of the Red Hills, copies of Chao Meng-fu's ' Water-village '; ' Slender Willows and Withered Oziers ' and the like. These were all works of great distinction and refinement, impregnated with the limpid and exotic spirit of the Yüan masters. But having resigned his ambitions as a landscape-painter he seldom brought himself to experiment in this direction. He once wrote to Wang Hui: ' In landscape I doubt whether I should ever break down the flimsiest barrier. The difficulty comes from my being trussed up in the rules and regulations of the Old Masters.'

" His flower paintings were simple, lucid, vigorous and solid; his colouring bright and elegant. The very workings of Heaven and moods of all things on earth seemed to cluster at his brush-point; and is not a great master measured just by this?

" . . . He was by nature fastidious and discriminating. If he met a friend he would perhaps spend a whole month painting for him. But to someone he did not like he would not sell a single leaf or blossom, and from such a one he regarded an offer of 100 pieces of gold . . . as lightly as a grain of mustard-seed. Thus when he had already been practising his art for a score or so of years, he was still as poor as at the start. But in his family life he never showed bitterness or discontent, but was always singing poems to himself, writing or painting, just for his own pleasing. He called his house the Ou-hsiang-kuan (' Tea-pot fragrance Lodging '); from here he exchanged poems with all the notables of the day, and here at sixty-odd he died. His sons could not afford to bury him with proper ceremony and Wang Hui took charge of the funeral. . . .

" When Mr. Censor Ch'a of Ching-k'ou in Kiangsu was going to Peking, Wang Hui escorted him. They moored their boat at a certain river-bank and in the course of drinking healths and saying farewell they fell to speaking of the Six Component Parts of painting. Hui, pointing to the autumn wood on the far side of the river, said to the Censor: ' Surely the uneven lines of the trees, now close-set, now straggling, the alternating tones of red and grey, form into a natural picture? ' and to please the Censor he painted the scene. Next morning Yün Nan-t'ien also came that way and was so much enraptured by the view that he wrote eight poems, and even the Censor commemorated it in a prose essay. This incident was frequently referred to at the time as a notable artistic conjuncture. Those were times of peace and prosperity; courtiers and grandees were able to make agreeable excursions, cultivate their taste, and promote the fine arts. An anecdote such as the above

helps us to imagine the loftiness of their thoughts and the refinement of their feelings on such occasions."[1]

"As a man he was so perfectly loyal and affectionate both to his parents and to his friends that he did not seem to belong to the present age. He had indeed the ways of an old-fashioned Confucian gentleman."[2]

"When I visited Yün Nan-t'ien and was going up to the hall I found courtyard and gate hushed in deep stillness and chrysanthemums growing thick upon the steps. Here indeed was one who was not ashamed to proclaim himself an aesthete."[3]

Nan-t'ien was author of the *Ou-hsiang kuan Hua Po*, a series of notes written as appreciations of various paintings which he had seen. It is reprinted in volumes 5 and 6 of the *Hua Hsüeh Hsin Yin*. It contains accounts of many conversations with Wang Hui and other great figures of the day. From the remarks contained in this book we see that his models were the great flower-painters of the Sung dynasty. For the Ming masters with their impressionistic and transcendental interpretation of nature[4] he had nothing but contempt. After seeing some flower-studies by Ch'en Shun (1483—1544) and Lu Chih (1495—1576) he writes: "They seem to have thought that art consists in altering nature. I on the other hand believe that it is only by pushing truthful representation to its absolute limits that one can transmit the inner essence of a flower's being."

PLATE 83 (A). *Chrysanthemums.* By Yün Nan-t'ien. Seventeenth century. (See text above.)—This artist was celebrated for his chrysanthemums; to this day they are copied, and "Chrysanthemum pieces" signed Yün Nan-t'ien, can be bought in China now anywhere. They are all, of course, forgeries. Real pictures by this artist are very valuable, and would never be shown to anyone with a view to sale unless he was a well-known collector known to be prepared to give a big price, and known, moreover, to be able to tell true from false. That is not so easy unless you have seen many genuine examples. The handwriting here seen is also by the artist. The first column on the right is the first nine words of a poem; the tenth word is by itself. That is merely done, I imagine, to look nice. The nine words and one over are then repeated again. (Chinese writing begins at the right-hand top corner.) The poem would be in four lines of five words each if written down according to our system of writing verse, I suppose.

PLATE 83 (B). *A Rose Bush.* Same artist.—This is the best Chinese rose picture I know. You should look at it closely; the detail has been marvellously preserved. This kind of painting is called by a special Chinese name, indicating that there are no outlines to the leaves. The veins are shown, but no edges; the edge is given by the wash. This effect was sometimes imitated on the porcelain of the Yung-Chêng period (1722—1735 A.D.). Yün Nan-t'ien was a master of it. How much he would have admired some of his Dutch contemporaries! Alas, he certainly never knew any good European artists; they equally certainly never knew him.

[1] *Hua Ch'eng Lu*, II, 2. [2] *Chiang-nan T'ung Chih*, quoted in *Kuo Ch'ao Hua Chih*, IV, 3.
[3] From the *Shuo Shih T'ang Chi*, quoted *ibid.*
[4] This applies to the flower-painters, not to the popular subject-illustrators such as Ch'iu Ying.

Plate 83 (c).—This is rather queer-looking. At least you can recognize the grapes, though to their right is a pomegranate split open to show the seeds in their red transparent capsules, full of wine-coloured juice. The things with thick dotted stalks are lotus flower seed pods. There is a dim lotus-bud too. The grapes, especially the way they are attached to their stalks, are miracles of accurate, intelligent drawing: not niggled any more than the letters of the poem, and like them quite sure of themselves.

Plate 84 (a).—Landscape by Yün Nan-t'ien.—What a wonderful tangle of trees! Pines, I think. How gracefully the wreaths of mist float among their tops!

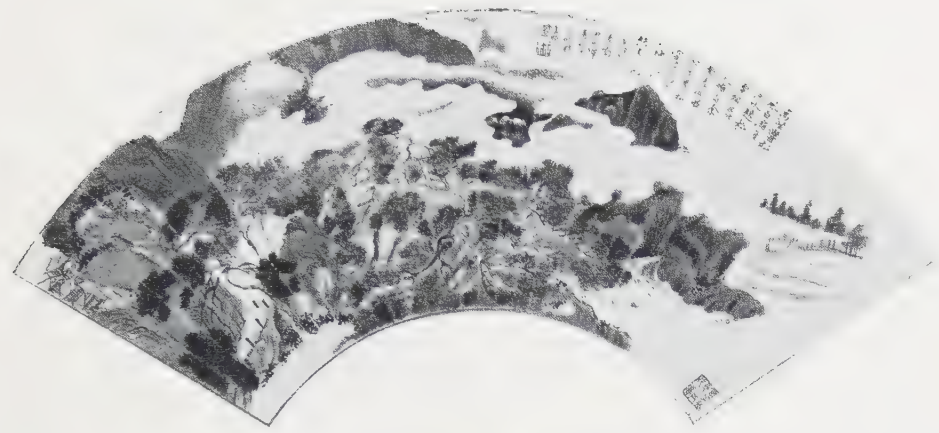
This is a famous painting. I am sorry the reproduction is so small: it is also less good in other ways than the others, because it is taken from a coloured reproduction. It has also been reproduced, however, in the *Kokka* magazine, I think. A wonderful publication; which can or could be obtained from Messrs. Quaritch, Grafton Street. It is far the best way to learn about Chinese painting to do this. The *Kokka* can also be studied at the Victoria and Albert Museum Art Library. It is full of wonderful Chinese works of art, and Japanese too. This picture is now in a Japanese collection. It was sold for £300, and very cheap at that I should say. If I were the British Government I would write and offer the owner £3000. I suspect he would not part. The Japanese are fond of Chinese art. The Chinese painter Mr. Ju Pé-on, Professor of Art at Nanking, told me a lot about the Chinese collection from which this fan came.

Plate 84 (b).—Look hard and long at this. It is also by Yün Nan-t'ien. You will see it has amazing effects of recession. It is in ink. Notice how the Chinese indicate the horizon, but don't spoil the picture by cutting it in half with a straight line, as ours so often do. The right-hand bottom corner is nearest the spectator. Take a big reading-glass.

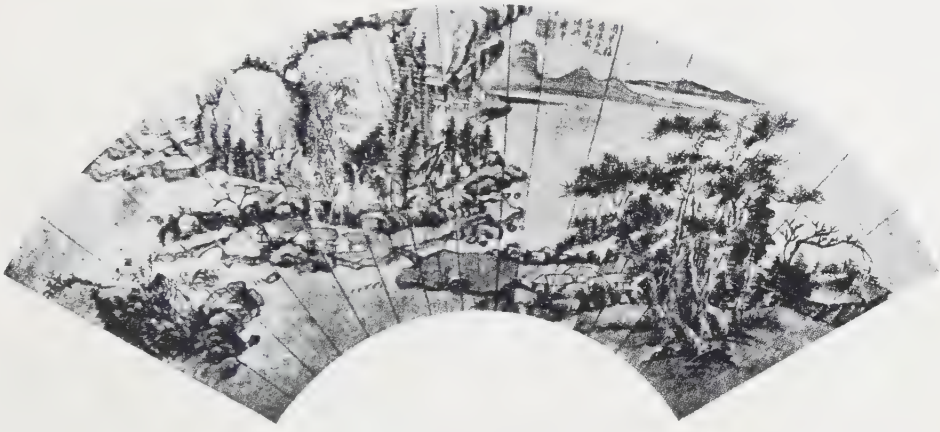
Plate 84 (c).—By an artist of about the same date. Who is he? Don't let's bother about that. Ask a Chinese in the tube (he will turn out to come from Siam, and will answer in American). I like the management of the cliffs on the opposite shore, and the way they disappear out of the picture. A lady in China called Mrs. Wu Chang-hsien does good fans in this style to-day. (See *The Studio*, November, 1935.) She is not a professional, but she is a great artist evidently.

Plate 85 (a).—This is a wonderful landscape, I think, as good as any other I know in the same style, of whatever date. The style is very much that of the Yüan dynasty. (See present writer's article in the *Listener*, November 27th, 1935.) There is, of course, no trace of European influence. The originator of this type of drawing was Mi Fei (1051—1107) (no pictures really by him survive, though many in his style). Then in the Yüan dynasty Kao Ko-kung and Fang Fang-ho did it very well. The present artist is Wu Li. He lived in the late seventeenth century. He became a Christian and was called Father Alunha. What a pity he did not give some of his pictures to his European friends! He knew, alas! that they would not appreciate them.

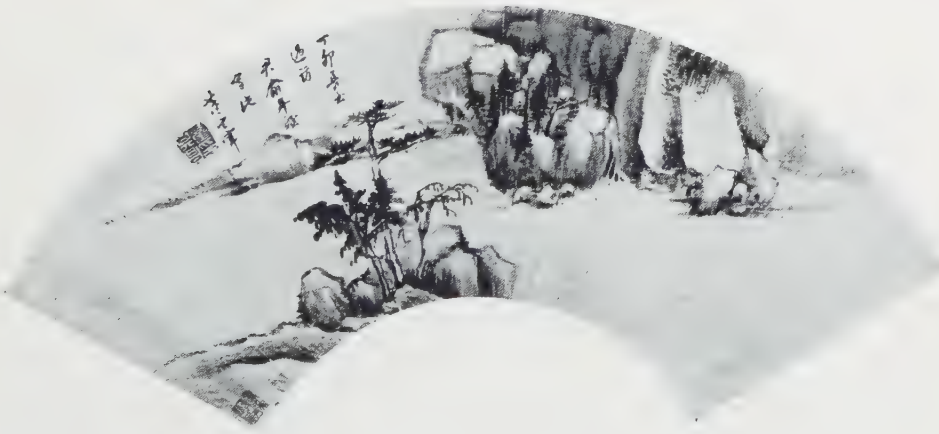
Plate 85 (b).—This is by Wang Hui. (See Mr. Waley's essay, quoted



A.



B.



C.

FAN PAINTINGS BY FAMOUS ARTISTS (*see* Text). Seventeenth century.

A.

B.

C.

FAN PAINTINGS BY FAMOUS ARTISTS (*see* Text). Seventeenth century.

in full.) It is one of the best I have seen of his: so grand the farther crags, so massive the near ravine. Touch after touch here tells like the notes of a clavichord. Wang Hui is sometimes said to have over-produced and got mechanical: not here. How dry yet how telling his strokes! They are like the fingering of Casals.

Plate 85 (c).—A pathway runs away from us to a little cluster of houses, leaving a lake on its left, hills to its right. Near us is a bridge: there is a rocky promontory near it, on which two landscape painter are sitting. They will go home later and do some painting: they do not care for sketching out of doors; anyone with a little practice can remember what he sees well enough to turn it into a picture. I think this picture is signed Wen Chia, whose sixteenth-century uncle, Wen Chên Ming, was so famous. To me it seems as good as a Cézanne, though nothing could be less like one. But what is the use of looking at Chinese paintings unless you know something about European ones? Cézanne's water-colours are better than anything I have ever seen in Chinese art, except perhaps some paintings by Chu ta reproduced in Japan. Moreover, the Chinese are as keen on Cézanne as we are when they see good specimens. Professor Liu Hai-su, formerly Director of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts of Shanghai, was a good judge of such matters; he was himself a good painter in all styles, and wrote a book which was to appear in English. So has Mr. Chiang Yee. It is possible for such men to have some idea about whether Chinese pictures are good or bad, or by this or that artist.

I hope I have given the impression in these notes that, unlike many other writers on Chinese painting, I cannot even read Chinese; my opinions are usually quite valueless unless I have fortified myself by reference to someone else. My feelings about Chinese pictures, however, and my enjoyment of them, I hope gradually to refine. "The heart I can use; the head I can borrow."

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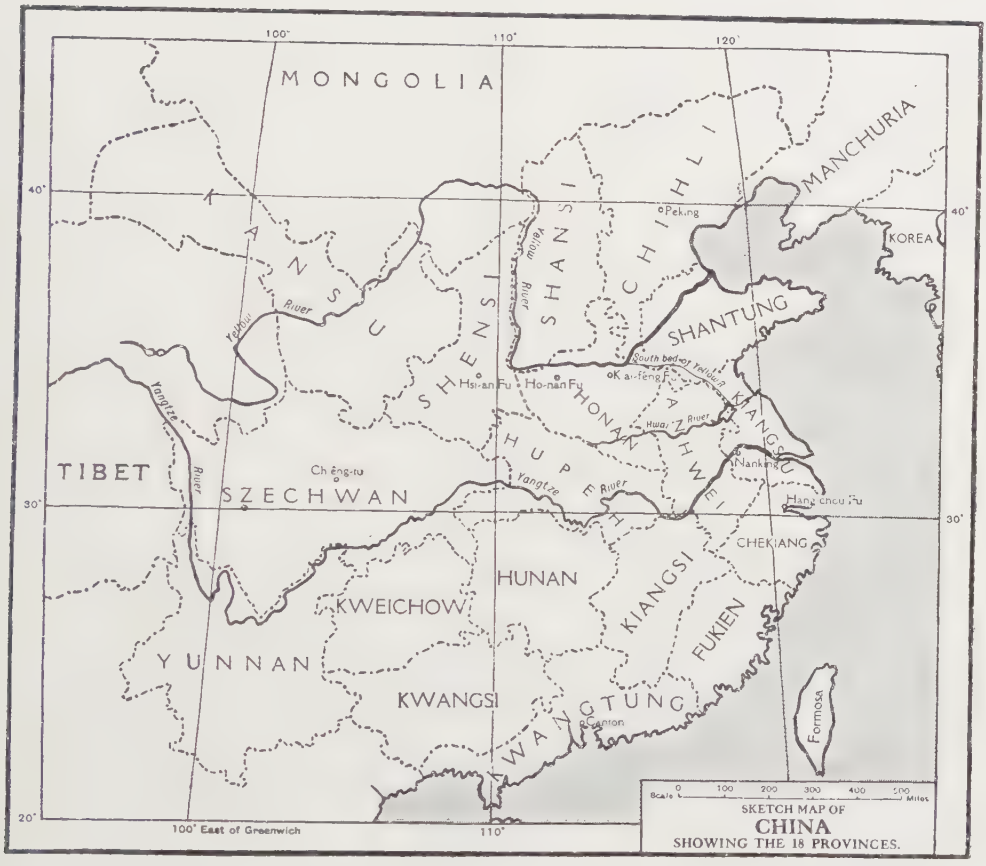
APPENDIX:

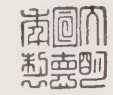
MAP, MARKS, TABLE OF DYNASTIES, Etc.



DATE MARKS

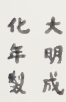
Dates may be indicated either by the reign-title or by cyclical characters or by a combination of both. The following marks, found chiefly on porcelain show reign-titles.

This is an example of a six-character mark. It is read from above downwards and from right to left. The first two characters are TA MING, the name of the dynasty; the second two are HSUAN TÊ, the reign-period; and the last two are NIEN CHIH, meaning "period made." A version in archaic "seal" characters is shown on the right.

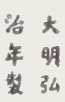


MING DYNASTY.

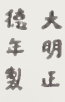
Below are some of the commoner date marks of the Ming dynasty. The six-character marks are followed by some four-character marks in which the name of the dynasty is omitted. It is the custom to refer to Emperors by the names of their reign-periods.



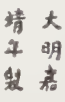
CH'ÊNG HUA
(1465—1487)



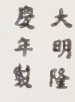
HUNG CHIH
(1488—1505)



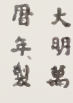
CHÊNG TÊ
(1506—1521)



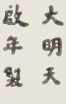
CHIA CHING
(1522—1566)



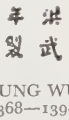
LUNG CH'ING
(1567—1572)



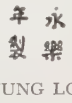
WAN LI
(1573—1619)



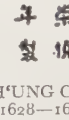
T'IEN CH'I
(1621—1627)



HUNG WU
(1368—1398)

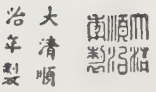


YUNG LO
(1403—1424)

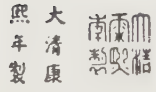


CH'UNG CHÊN
(1628—1643)

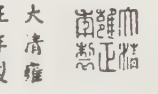
MANCHU OR CH'ING DYNASTY.



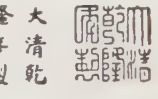
SHUN CHIH
(1644—1661)



K'ANG HSI
(1662—1722)

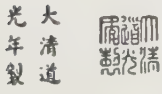


YUNG CHÊNG
(1723—1735)

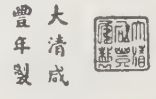


CH'IEN LUNG
(1736—1795)

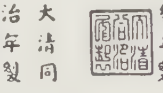
CHIA CH'ING
(1796—1820)



TAO KUANG
(1821—1850)



HSIEN FÊNG
(1851—1861)



T'UNG CHIH
(1862—1884)

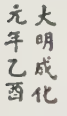
KUANG HSÜ
(1875—1908)

Made by Imperial order in the Yung Chêng period

CH'IEN LUNG
(1736—1795)
Name of dynasty omitted.

CYCLICAL DATE MARKS.

The Chinese cycle is a period of 60 years, and each year is indicated by combining two characters, the first being one of the Ten Celestial Stems and the second one of the Twelve Earthly Branches.



Cyclical year *i-yu* (1465) of the Ming reign-period Ch'êng Hua

Made in the cyclical year *hsin ch'ou* recurring (1721), indicating the recurrence of this date under K'ang Hsi, who regined for over sixty years.

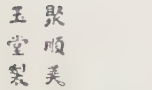
Made in the cyclical year *ping hsü* (1766?), indication of which cycle is here omitted.

Cyclical year *kuei yu* (1873), being the 12th of the T'ung Chih period.

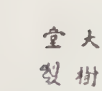
In the following table the first horizontal line of characters represents the Ten Stems. If the eye is carried vertically downwards from the Stem which occurs in an inscription until the Branch character is recognized, the date is found by taking the number printed here against the Branch to represent the year calculated from the beginning of particular cycle concerned. From the end of the Yüan period onwards the cycles began in 1324, 1384, 1444, 1504, 1564, 1624, 1684, 1744, 1804, 1864 and 1924 A.D.

甲 chia	乙 i	丙 ping	丁 ting	戊 mou	己 chi	庚 keng	辛 hsin	壬 jên	癸 kuei
子 1 tzu	丑 2 ch'ou	寅 3 yin	卯 4 mao	辰 5 ch'ên	巳 6 sz̄	午 7 wu	未 8 wei	申 9 shên	酉 10 yu
戌 11 hsu	亥 12 hai	子 13	丑 14	寅 15	卯 16	辰 17	巳 18	午 19	未 20
申 21	酉 22	戌 23	亥 24	子 25	丑 26	寅 27	卯 28	辰 29	巳 30
午 31	未 32	申 33	酉 34	戌 35	亥 36	子 37	丑 38	寅 39	卯 40
辰 41	巳 42	午 43	未 44	申 45	酉 46	戌 47	亥 48	子 49	丑 50
寅 51	卯 52	辰 53	巳 54	午 55	未 56	申 57	酉 58	戌 59	亥 60

HALL MARKS

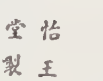


CH'Ü SHUN MEI YÜ T'ANG CHIH
"Made at the Ch'ü Shun (Abundant Prosperity) Hall of Beautiful Jade."



TA SHU T'ANG CHI
"Made at the Big Tree Hall."

CH'I YÜ T'ANG CHIH
"Made at the Rare Jade Hall."



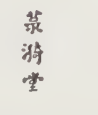
I YÜ T'ANG CHIH
"Made at the Ductile Jade Hall."

I YU T'ANG SHIH
"Made at the Hall of Profit and Prosperity."

YANG HO T'ANG CHIH
"Made at the Hall for the Cultivation of Harmony."

TS'AI JUN T'ANG CHIH
"Made at the Hall of Brilliant Colours."

YÜAN WÊN WU KUO CHIH CHAI
"Pavilion where I wish to hear of my faults."



LU YI T'ANG
"The Hall of Waving Bamboos."

CHU CHIH CHÜ
"The Red Rock Retreat."

HSIEH-CHU TSAO
"Made at the Hsieh Bamboos."

HSIEH-CHU CHU-JÊN TSAO
"Made by the Lord of the Hsieh Bamboos."

WAN SHIH CHÜ
"The Myriad Rocks Retreat."

SHU FU
"Imperial Palace." Mark of the Yüan dynasty (1280—1367).

TA YA CHAI
Hall-mark and motto of the late Empress Dowager

POTTERS' MARKS

These are not common in China. The first of the three marks reproduced below is to be read in inverse fashion, from left to right.

WU CHÊN-HSIEN YAO
"Pottery of Wu Chên-hsien."

KO MING-HSIANG CHIH
"Made by Ko Ming-hsiang."

KO YÜAN-HSIANG CHIH
"Made by Ko Yüan-hsiang."

MARKS OF DEDICATION AND GOOD WISHES

TA CHI
"Great Good-luck."

WAN SHOU WU CHIANG
"A myriad ages never ending."

FU LU SHOU
"Happiness, Rank and Longevity."

YUNG CH'ING CH'ANG CH'UN
"Eternal Prosperity and enduring Spring.

CH'ANG MING FU KUEI
"Long Life, Riches and Honour."

FU KUEI CH'ANG CH'UN
"Riches, Honour and enduring Spring."

WÊN CHANG SHAN TOU
"Scholarship high as the mountains and the Great Bear."

C'HING
"Congratulations"

SHOU
"Longevity."
Known in Holland as the Spider mark.

CHI HSIANG JU I
"Good fortune and fulfiment of wishes."

TÊ HUA CH'ANG CH'UN
"Virtue, Culture and enduring Spring."
WAN LI NIEN TSAO
"Made in the Wan Li period."

CHIH
"By Imperial order."

SHUANG HSI
"Double, or wedded, Joy." Inscribed on bridal presents.

BARAGON TUMED
"For the Princess of the west wing of the Tumed Mongolian Banners."

MARKS IN PRAISE OF THE PIECES INSCRIBED

YÜ. "Jade."

KU. "Ancient."

WÊN. "Artistic."

CHÊN
"Precious, a Gem."

CHÊN YÜ
"True Jade."

CH'I YÜ PAO TING CHIH CHÊN
"A Gem among precious vessels of rare Jade."

WAN YÜ
"Trinket Jade."

YA WAN
"Artistic Trinket."

CH'I SHIH PAO TING CHIH CHÊN
"A Gem among precious vessels of rare Stone."

CHÊN WAN
"Precious Trinket."

CH'I CHÊN JU YÜ
"Rare and precious as Jade."

TSAI CH'UAN CHIH LO
"I know that they (fishes) rejoice in water."

SYMBOLIC MARKS

THE EIGHT TRIGRAMS (*pa kua*), in the centre of which is a symbol for the Two Regulating Powers (*yin* and *yang*).

EIGHT BUDDHIST EMBLEMS
pa chi hsiang).

THE EIGHT PRECIOUS THINGS
(pa pao).

G MARK.

SQUARE SEAL MARK.

LOTUS MARK.

LOTUS MARK.

FLOWER MARK.

PRUNUS MARK.

LEAF MARK.

Ling-chih FUNGUS MARK.

Ling-chih FUNGUS MARK.

Svastika and Lozenge.

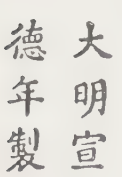
Ting. FOUR LEGGED CENSER.

T'u. THE HARE OF MOON-LORE.

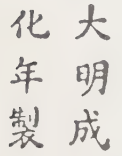
Pi Ting Ju I. BRUSH, INK-CAKE AND SCEPTRE.

THE PRINCIPAL REIGN MARKS

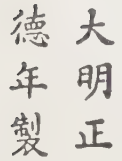
1. OF THE MING DYNASTY:



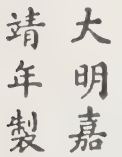
Hsüan Tê (1426—1435).



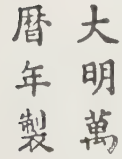
Ch'êng Hua (1465—1487).



Chêng Tê (1506—1521).

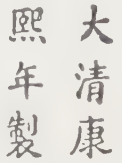


Chia Ching (1522—1566).

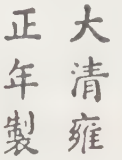


Wan Li (1573—1619).

2. OF THE CH'ING DYNASTY:

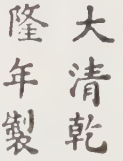


K'ang Hsi (1662—1722).



Yung Chêng (1723—1735).

The Same in Seal Characters.



Ch'ien Lung (1736—1795).

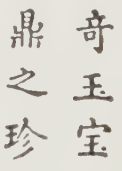
The Same in Seal Characters.

OTHER MARKS

T'ang (a hall): as used in hallmarks.

Chu Shih Chü (Red Rocks Retreat).

Yü (jade).



Ch'i yü pao ting chih chên (A gem among precious vessels of rare jade).

THE REIGNING CHINESE DYNASTIES

THE legendary period of Chinese history (as distinct from the purely mythical ages which preceded, and which, according to the more extravagant chronologers of the country, reach back some two or three millions of years to the creation of the world) begins with *Fu-hi*, the reputed founder of the monarchy, the first year of whose reign is placed in 2852 B.C. He is the first of the *Wu Ti*, or Five Rulers, who are succeeded by the Emperors *Yao* (2356 B.C.) and *Shun* (2255 B.C.), with whose reigns the *Shu Ching*, or "Historical Classic," opens. *Fuh-hi's* immediate successors were *Shên-nung*, the Divine Husbandman (2737 B.C.); *Huang-ti*, the Yellow Emperor (2697 B.C.); *Shao-hao* (2597 B.C.); and *Chuan Hsü* (2513 B.C.). The Emperor *Shun* was succeeded by the Great *Yü* (2205 B.C.), the founder of the first of the twenty-four dynasties which have ruled the empire in succession down to the advent of the reigning Manchu dynasty in A.D. 1644.

TABLE OF APPROXIMATE SUCCESSION OF THE CHINESE DYNASTIES

	BEGAN	
1. Hsia 夏 . . .	B.C. 2205	The Three Ancient Dynasties.
2. Shang* 商 . . .	1766	
3. Chou 周 . . .	1122	
4. Ch'in 秦 . . .	255	
5. Han 漢 . . .	206	The usurper *Wang Mang* occupied the throne A.D. 9—23.
6. Eastern Han 東漢 .	A.D. 25	
7. After Han 後漢 . .	221	Three Kingdoms, 三國, divided China, the 漢 Han, 魏 Wei, and 吳 Wu.
8. Chin 晉 . . .	265	
9. Eastern Chin 東晉 . .	317	
10. Sung 宋 . . .	420	This period is known by the collective name of *Nan Pei Ch'ao*, Northern and Southern Dynasties, as the 魏 Wei ruled the north from 420 to 550.
11. Ch'i 齊 . . .	479	
12. Liang 梁 . . .	502	
13. Ch'ên 陳 . . .	557	

* In 1401 B.C. the title of this dynasty was changed from *Shang* to *Yin*.

		BEGAN	
14. Sui	隋	A.D. 589	
14. T'ang	唐	618	
16. After Liang	後梁	907	These short-lived dynasties are known collectively as the 五代 *Wu Tai*, Five Dynasties.
17. After T'ang	後唐	923	
18. After Chin	後晉	936	
19. After Han	後漢	947	
20. After Chou	後周	951	
21. Sung	宋	960	
22. Southern Sung	南宋	1127	The Niu-chih Tartars occupied North China (1115—1234) as the *Chin* dynasty 金朝
23. Yüan	元	1280	Mongolian dynasty founded by *Kublai Khan*.
24. Ming	明	1368	
25. Ch'ing	清	1644	The *Manchu dynasty*.
26. Republic	中華民國	1912	

TABLE OF REIGNS OF THE LAST TWO DYNASTIES

EMPERORS OF THE 明 MING DYNASTY

	DYNASTIC TITLE, OR MIAO HAO.		TITLE OF REIGN OR NIEO HAO.	DATE OF ACCESSION.
太祖	T'ai Tsu	洪武	Hung-wu	1368
惠帝	Hui Ti	建文	Chien-wên	1399
成祖	Ch'êng Tsu	永樂	Yung-lo	1403
仁宗	Jên Tsung	洪熙	Hung-hsi	1425
宣宗	Hsüan Tsung	宣德	Hsüan-tê	1426
英帝	Ying Tsung	正統	Chêng-t'ung	1436
景宗	Ching Ti	泰	Ching-t'ai	1450
英	Ying Tsung	天順	T'ien-shun	1457

(resumed government)

憲宗	Hsien Tsung	. . .	成化	Ch'êng-hua	. . 1465
孝宗	Hsiao Tsung	. . .	宏治	Hung-chih	. . . 1488
武宗	Wu Tsung	. . .	正德	Chêng-tê	. . . 1506
世宗	Shih Tsung	. . .	嘉靖	Chia-ching	. . . 1522
穆宗	Mu Tsung	. . .	隆慶	Lung-ch'ing	. . 1567
神宗	Shên Tsung	. . .	萬歷	Wan-li	. . . 1573
光宗	Kuang Tsung	. . .	泰昌	T'ai-ch'ang	. . 1620
熹宗	Hsi Tsung	. . .	天啓	T'ien-ch'i	. . . 1621
莊烈帝	Chuang Lieh Ti	. .	崇禎	Ch'ung-chên	. . 1628

EMPERORS OF THE 大清, THE GREAT CH'ING DYNASTY

世祖	Shih Tsu	. . . .	順治	Shun-chih	. . . 1644
聖祖	Shêng-Tsu	. . . .	康熙	K'ang-hsi	. . . 1662
世宗	Shih Tsung	. . .	雍正	Yung-chêng	. . 1723
高宗	Kao Tsung	. . . .	乾隆	Ch'ien-lung	. . 1736
仁宗	Jên Tsung	. . . .	嘉慶	Chia-ch'ing	. . 1796
宣宗	Hsüan Tsung	. . .	道光	Tao-kuang	. . . 1821
文宗	Wên Tsung	. . . .	咸同	Hsien-fêng	. . . 1851
穆宗	Mu Tsung	. . . .	光緒	T'ung-ch'ih	. . . 1862
			光緒	Kuang-hsü	. . . 1875
			宣統	Hsüan T'ung	. . 1909

中華民國 Republic T'ung . 1912

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